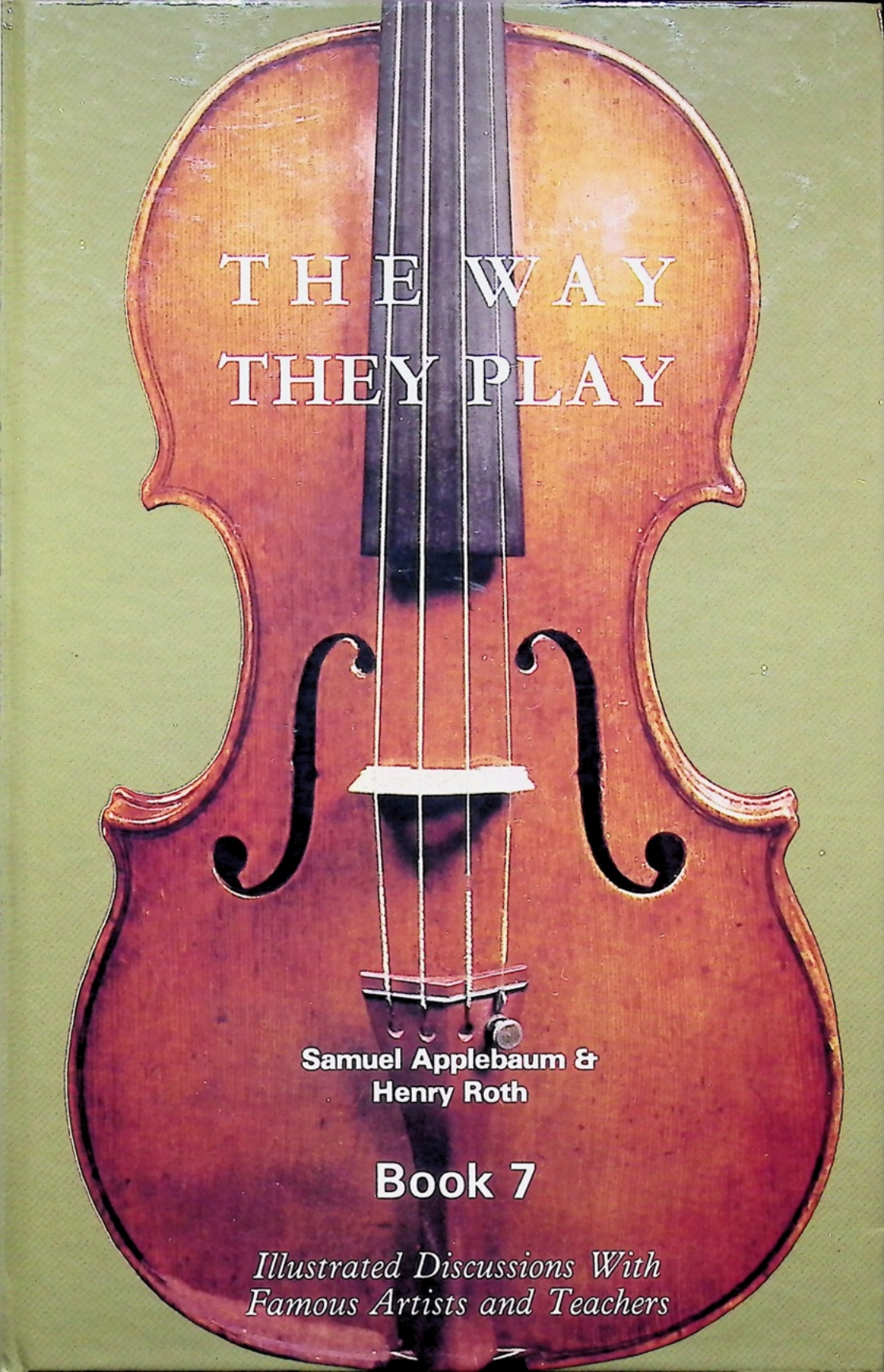
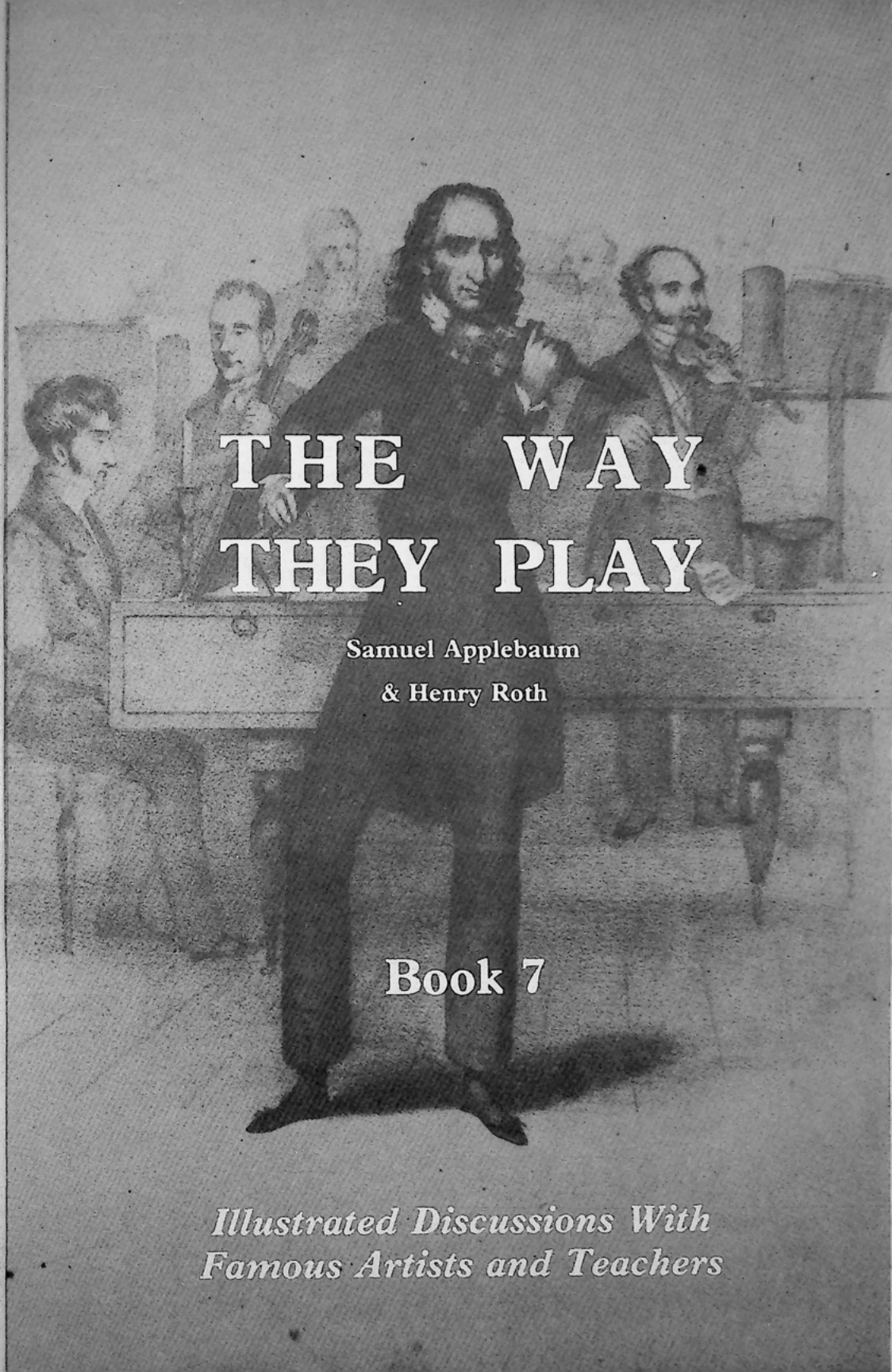

THE WAY
THEY PLAY
Samuel Applebaum &
Henry Roth
Book 7
Illustrated Discussions With
Famous Artists and Teachers

Front endpages: Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod, Franco Gulli, and Samuel Applebaum.
Back endpages: Samuel Applebaum, Fredell Lack, and Sada Applebaum.



THE WAY THEY PLAY

Samuel Applebaum
& Henry Roth

Book 7

Illustrated Discussions With Famous Artists and Teachers

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Contents

Publisher's Foreword 9

OSCAR SHUMSKY 11

ZARA NELSOVA 51

WILLIAM LINCER 113

BARRY GREEN 145

FREDELL LACK 185

FRANCO GULLI 237

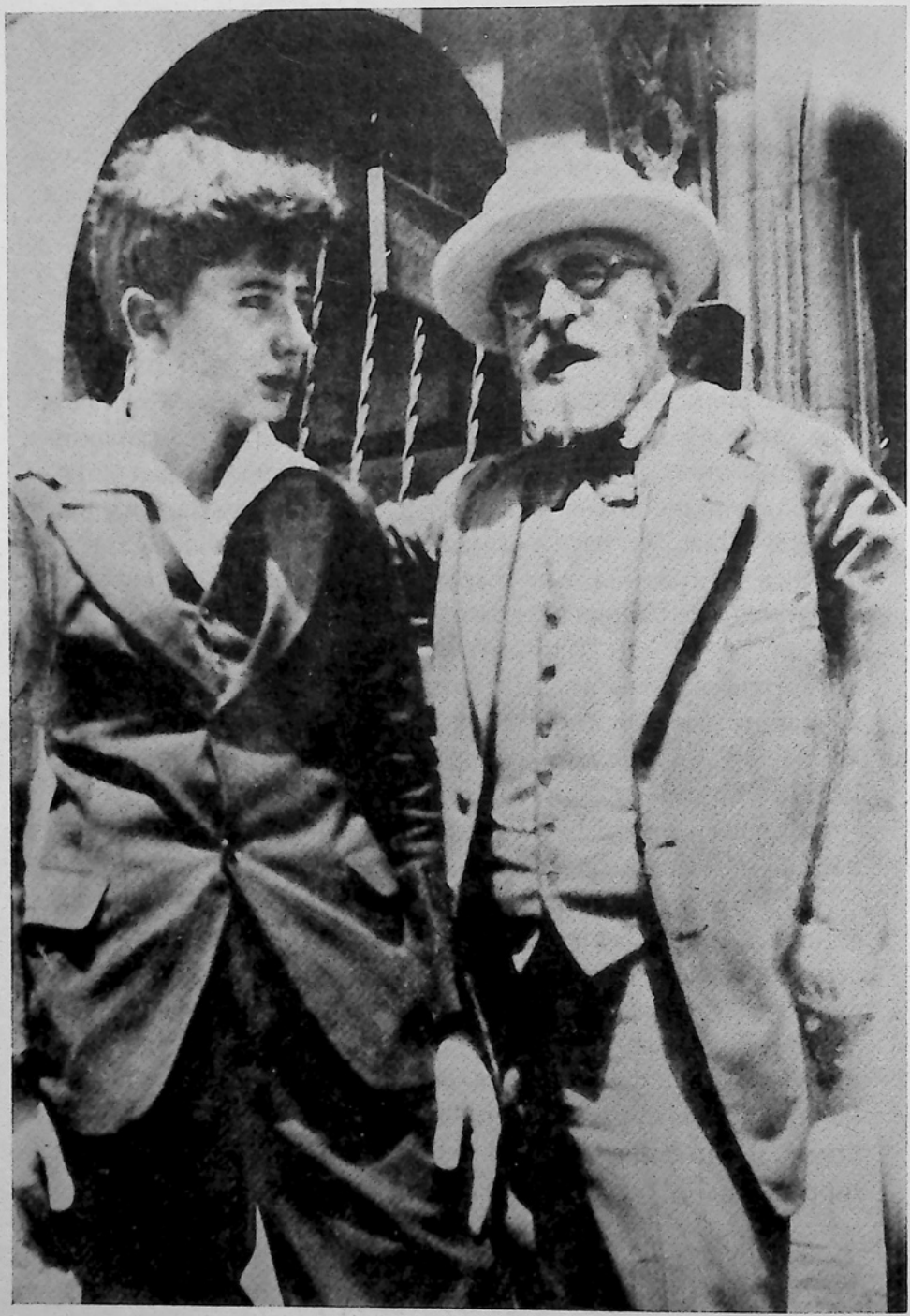
Publisher's Foreword

The publication of Volumes Five and Six of "The Way They Play" series, with the new format which includes musical analysis of various works, plus fingerings and bowings from personal scores of leading string artists, has elicited much enthusiasm from our readers. Thus, we have pursued this policy in Volume Seven, together with the intimate discussions of instrumental lore and comprehensive photography incorporated in the series since its inception.

Imagine—if only we could have had similar personalized documentation from such greats of yesteryear as Viotti, Paganini, Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, Neruda and Wilhelmj, among others! In this wise, the collaboration of Messers. Applebaum and Roth constitutes an imperishable legacy embodying the musical erudition of eminent string personalities of our time.

In reply to many queries, we plan to continue the series indefinitely, since there is still a veritable legion of international concertizing soloists, chamber music artists and first chair players of great orchestras who have important contributions to make to our collective string heritage.

We wish to acknowledge our deep appreciation to Paul Paradise for his invaluable assistance in the preparation of Volume Seven, and to Esther Roth for her indefatigable draft editing and supplemental photography.



Oscar Shumsky with Leopold Auer.

Oscar Shumsky

Oscar Shumsky was born in Philadelphia. His father, a Russian emigré, was a skilled cabinet-maker and a self-taught amateur violinist. At age three, the lad evinced interest in the violin and received some primary training from his father and older brother. He was soon given a violin of his own and sent to Max Senofsky (father of the well-known violinist, Berl Senofsky) for formal lessons. His progress was rapid, and after a few years he performed Vivaldi's A-minor Concerto at the annual concert of the Symphony Club at Philadelphia's famed Academy of Music. However, Shumsky's official debut took place when he was eight, with Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, in Mozart's A-major Concerto. He then appeared as a soloist in children's concerts under the leadership of Ernest Schelling, who took an active interest in his career. Schelling presented the young violinist in children's concerts with the Boston and Baltimore Symphonies and the New York Philharmonic, as well as the Philadelphia Orchestra, and made it possible for him to study with the celebrated Leopold Auer. After Auer's passing, Shumsky completed his studies with Efrem Zimbalist at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. He has been a member of the violin faculty at the Juilliard School from 1953 to 1978 and taught at Curtis from 1961 to 1965. During his long, successful career he has appeared as soloist with many of the major orchestras of Europe and the United States. In 1962 he received a Ford Foundation grant awarded to an outstanding American violinist. As a recitalist, Shumsky has frequently performed as violinist and violist on the same program, receiving acclaim for his virtuosity on both instruments. He made his debut as a conductor in 1959 at the Canadian Stratford Festival and was subsequently appointed Director of Music until his retirement from that post in 1969. He continues to further his podium career in appearances throughout North America. He is also recognized as an exceptional chamber music artist, and conducts classes in violin, chamber music and orchestral string techniques at Yale.

Shumsky has recently recorded the Six Bach Solo Sonatas and the complete cycle of Mozart Violin-Piano Sonatas for the Musical Heritage Society and is currently engaged in recording the entire Kreisler repertoire. He and his wife, Louise have two sons, Eric and Noel. Eric, a graduate of Juilliard, is a professional violist. Shumsky's hobbies are photography and microscopy.

Oscar Shumsky has long enjoyed the most significant recognition a violinist can receive—the unqualified esteem and respect of his colleagues. In the Foreword to the memoirs of William Primrose, Yehudi Menuhin writes—"I share several things with Bill (Primrose)—his feeling about the magic of a London wartime summer, his admiration for Oscar Shumsky as one of the great violinists and teachers, and his evaluation of competitions." David Oistrakh has called Shumsky "one of America's great violinists." Indeed, amid the higher echelons of professional violinists and knowledgeable string instrument authorities, many an individual who is quick to criticize or even berate one or another violinist, has nothing but fulsome praise for Shumsky. His lofty reputation as "a violinist's violinist" is indisputable.

Shumsky, a confirmed devotee of fine Chinese and Franco-Italian cuisine, met with us at one of his favorite Chinese restaurants in New York. The distinguished musician is a stocky man of medium height, with heavy features and shaggy, beetled eyebrows. His hands and fingers are powerful and full-fleshed; his speech and manner, very intense. One immediately receives the impression that Shumsky is an exceptionally self-demanding person who expects similar response from his associates and pupils. We found him to be highly articulate and imaginative in presenting his ideas and opinions, and soon discovered that he also possesses a dry wit and a sense of humor.

"Please tell us about your early years," we requested.

Shumsky replied with his characteristic broad smile.

"I am a native of Philadelphia, born at Third and Delancey Street in a typical blue-collar neighborhood near the Delaware River. My earliest publicity used to claim I was born 'a stone's throw from Independence Hall', which was true enough—provided Hercules was the thrower. Today this area is part of the rebuilt 'Society Hill', one of the new Philadelphia's proudest possessions."

"What gravitated you toward the violin?"

"Sibling rivalry, I suppose," he replied. "When I was three years old, my older brother was already getting violin lessons. I

Oscar Shumsky at the age of 5 in Philadelphia.

took every opportunity to grab his violin and try to play it. Once I yanked the violin off a table and dropped it, causing some damage to the instrument. I think this was the catalyst that convinced my parents that I had musical talent," he chuckled. "As you know," he added, "many a misguided career has been launched on such feeble grounds. After some initial instruction by my father and older brother, they gave me a violin of my own and bundled me off to Max Senofsky for lessons."

"Did your father also play?"

"Yes. As a self-taught amateur he had an insatiable love for the violin. He had a keen ear, a remarkable sense of phrasing, and a beautiful natural bow arm that was a delight to watch. He couldn't read music, but knew an exhaustive number of folk-tunes from his native Russia, and was able to fiddle bits and pieces of the standard violin repertory."

"Once started, how well did you progress with your lessons?"

"Very rapidly for the first few years. At seven, I played Vivaldi's A-minor Concerto at the annual concert of the Symphony Club Orchestra at the Academy of Music. The conductor, William F. Happich, a very thorough theorist and a 'no-nonsense' musician, probably objected to having so green a young upstart getting his first experience as a soloist-with-orchestra under his baton. Thus, I wound up performing the concerto with piano accompaniment. Luckily, when I was eight, Leopold Stokowski had more confidence in my playing, and he offered me a solo appearance with the Philadelphia Orchestra. I played Mozart's Concerto No. 5, in A-major. This, in turn, led to several engagements with Ernest Schelling at his children's concerts."

"We understand that Schelling was very helpful to your early career."

He certainly was! Schelling was an exceptionally warm and kind person. He would use lantern-slides to illustrate his lecture-concerts to the children. They all called him 'Uncle Ernest', and he was enormously popular with them. He not only presented me at his children's concerts with the Philadelphia, New York, Boston

Oscar Shumsky, at the age of 9, with his teacher, Prof. Leopold Auer.

and Baltimore orchestras, but arranged for me to play for his close friend, Fritz Kreisler, who was a staunch admirer of Schelling's considerable musical abilities. I recall the time Schelling played for me, sight-reading the accompaniment of the Conus Violin Concerto from the orchestral score at the piano!"

"What happened at your audition for Kreisler?"

"This was a most interesting affair for me. It so happened that a few weeks prior to my audition with Kreisler, I heard him play two performances of the Beethoven Violin Concerto. I was fascinated by Kreisler's cadenzas which had not yet appeared in print. Retaining the cadenzas in my memory, I played them when I came home after the concerts. My brother told Schelling of my efforts, and Schelling asked me to surprise Kreisler by playing as much as I could of the cadenzas. Kreisler proved to be both amused and delighted. He stated that I remembered all of the notes, barring a few slips here and there that had to do with rhythmic, rather than harmonic matters."

"Did you have any more personal experiences with Kreisler?"

"I played for him again, this time for a gathering of notables from the New York music scene, in the magnificent music room at the home of the famous banker, Otto H. Kahn, who was also chairman of the Metropolitan Opera Board. The audience was like a 'Who's Who' of music, including such noted musicians as George Gershwin, Maria Jeritza, the opera diva, Arthur Bodansky, head of the German wing at the Metropolitan Opera, and most important for me—Fritz Kreisler.

"I was about eight or nine at the time, and Schelling generously offered to act as my accompanist in a group of pieces which included Kreisler's 'Sicilienne et Rigaudon', 'Praeludium and Allegro', 'Shepherd's Madrigal' and 'Gypsy Caprice', as I recall. On the way to the stage, Schelling espied Kreisler. After introducing me from the platform, Schelling called to Kreisler, saying—'Fritz, you know these pieces so much better than I, won't you please come and play them with our young friend?"

"Kreisler, an accomplished pianist, and always the gentleman, immediately agreed. For me, this was an unforgettable moment."

"Did you also study with Auer when he was at Curtis?"

"Yes—I remember performing Joachim's 'Hungarian' Concerto and the Brahms A-major Sonata, which I studied with Auer, at

Oscar Shumsky, 14 years old, with Efrem Zimbalist.

Oscar Shumsky was already recognized as an extraordinary talent when he was in his teens.

my first student's recital in Curtis Hall. I was about 11 at the time. Then, when Auer passed away, Efrem Zimbalist supervised my studies until the time of my graduation. Many years later, Zimbalist, as Director of the Curtis Institute, invited me to become a member of the violin faculty."

"Could you give us some of your impressions of Zimbalist?"

"Gladly. Zimbalist was one of the most immaculate violinists I ever heard, as well as an uncompromising musician. His left hand was flawless in facility, his articulation was superb and his intonation was dead center. His bow arm, too, was a model of stability and flexibility in spiccato, up or down bow staccato and string crossings. He had the longest and steadiest bow draw of anyone.

"Zimbalist used to tease me mercilessly with that seemingly endless long bow. I remember how one day when I was playing the slow movement of the Goldmark Concerto at a lesson, Zimbalist, violin in hand, joined me at the coda and continued until the final note. On that note, when I was already at the tip, Zimbalist had barely passed mid-bow. I felt like some incompetent conductor who has stopped beating a bar too early, standing there foolishly while the orchestra finishes without him. Since I was very proud, I felt humiliated and irritated.

"I worked and worked at this slow draw until I found exactly the right adjustment between speed-of-pull, bow pressure and adjustment of the vibrato. I plotted my revenge. My opportunity came in the form of the Adagio from Sinding's A-minor Suite. As we approached the final note, out of the corner of my eye I watched him getting ready for his famous slow draw. But this time I was ready for him! I proceeded to conserve every millimeter of bow, barely moving the stick with my fingers. This time it was the master who reached the end of the bow before the apprentice. I had actually beaten him at the draw!"

"Did he take it good-naturedly?"

"He never said a word about it. But I'll never forget the twinkle in his eye when he found himself upstaged. In reminiscing about the incident, I am convinced that he intended the whole scenario to serve as an object lesson that would direct my competitiveness into constructive channels."

We asked Shumsky if he believed one could learn anything of significance from merely observing the manner in which others play.

In Stratford, Ontario, 1960, Oscar Shumsky was soloist and conductor of the Music Festival Orchestra. During this same festival (facing page), which took place at the Shakespearean Festival Theatre two years later, Shumsky was Director of Music and he is shown here with his family. His wife Louise looks proudly at her son Eric as he plays the violin. Noel is seated at the piano with his father.

"Often," he declared. "And not only from watching good players. One can also learn much by observing poor players. However, it is important to develop the ability to sift out those mannerisms which contribute to the real results in performance, good or bad—to be able to differentiate between the 'acting' and the 'performing'. When I was a youngster I attended every concert I could."

"Who impressed you most at that time?"

"Without a doubt—Kreisler. His marvelous sound is unforgettable. He produced a tone of infinite variety and color. Each shading was wondrously adapted to the emotional essence of the phrase, and every sound he made was beautiful in itself. I will always remember his wonderful rhythmic inflection, and the charm, elegance and aristocracy of his interpretations."

Oscar Shumsky as a young artist.

Shumsky's adulation of Kreisler and his intimate knowledge of Kreisler's art are vividly reflected in his performance of Kreisler compositions, and many observers, including the co-authors, consider that he approximates the sound and style of Kreisler as closely as any violinist who played or plays the music, though he scrupulously avoids crass imitation.

We asked him to tell us of his experiences with Toscanini and the NBC Symphony.

"Playing under Toscanini was by far the most exciting of my orchestral experiences. It came about in a rather odd way.

"In 1939 I was invited to perform a series of weekly recitals over the NBC network, in collaboration with the renowned American pianist, Earl Wild. We had a most enjoyable time performing a wide variety of violin-piano sonatas. The newly-formed NBC Symphony was in full swing in the same building, and many of the orchestra players including William Primrose would wander into the observation booth of our broadcast studio to eavesdrop.

"I kept hearing amazing accounts of Toscanini's prowess, especially about his manner of conducting rehearsals. Later, when it was proposed that I become a member of the orchestra, I accepted on the spot. Of course, it was necessary that I play an audition."

"This must have been a relatively simple task for a player with your formidable equipment."

"It turned out that way, but only because I was lucky. You see, the only knowledge I had of the symphonic repertoire was through score-study and as a listener. Name any symphony, and I had never performed it. When I had been invited to join the NBC group, no one bothered to ask whether or not I had ever played in an orchestra before, or whether I was familiar with the repertoire. I knew the string quartet literature well enough, as I had played countless evenings of chamber music at my home since I was ten. But orchestral repertoire is a much different matter!"

"What actually occurred at the audition?"

"It took place at the home of Samuel Chotzinoff, Toscanini's close friend and aide, who had been chief critic of the New York Times, and was also the brother-in-law and former accompanist of Heifetz. My teacher, Zimbalist, was there, as was William Primrose and my old schoolmate and good friend, Leonard Rose.

My audition was to consist of a reading of Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 59, No. 3. Rose and I had played quartets together many evenings at my home in Philadelphia. I had never played with Primrose, though I knew his playing well, both as a solo violist and as a member of the London String Quartet. Zimbalist honored me by volunteering to play the second violin part."

"Obviously you passed the test with flying colors. But what happened when you came face-to-face with the orchestral parts, sitting in the violin section?"

"It wasn't easy. They asked me to sit on the second stand of the first violins. The initial work I had to play was 'Harold in Italy', with Primrose as viola soloist. I had never even heard the work before, and had to depend on my sight-reading ability, along with an occasional restraining bow across my strings from my stand partner, Remo Bolognini, a superb violinist and orchestra player, who prevented me from making more than a few brash 'solo' entrances. The old man's gimlet eyes—they seemed to be everywhere at once—and I was practically under his nose!

"I learned very quickly to count 'rest' measures accurately, and not depend solely on my musical ear, which could have proved a dangerous illusion amidst the assymetry of Berlioz' phrase-lengths.

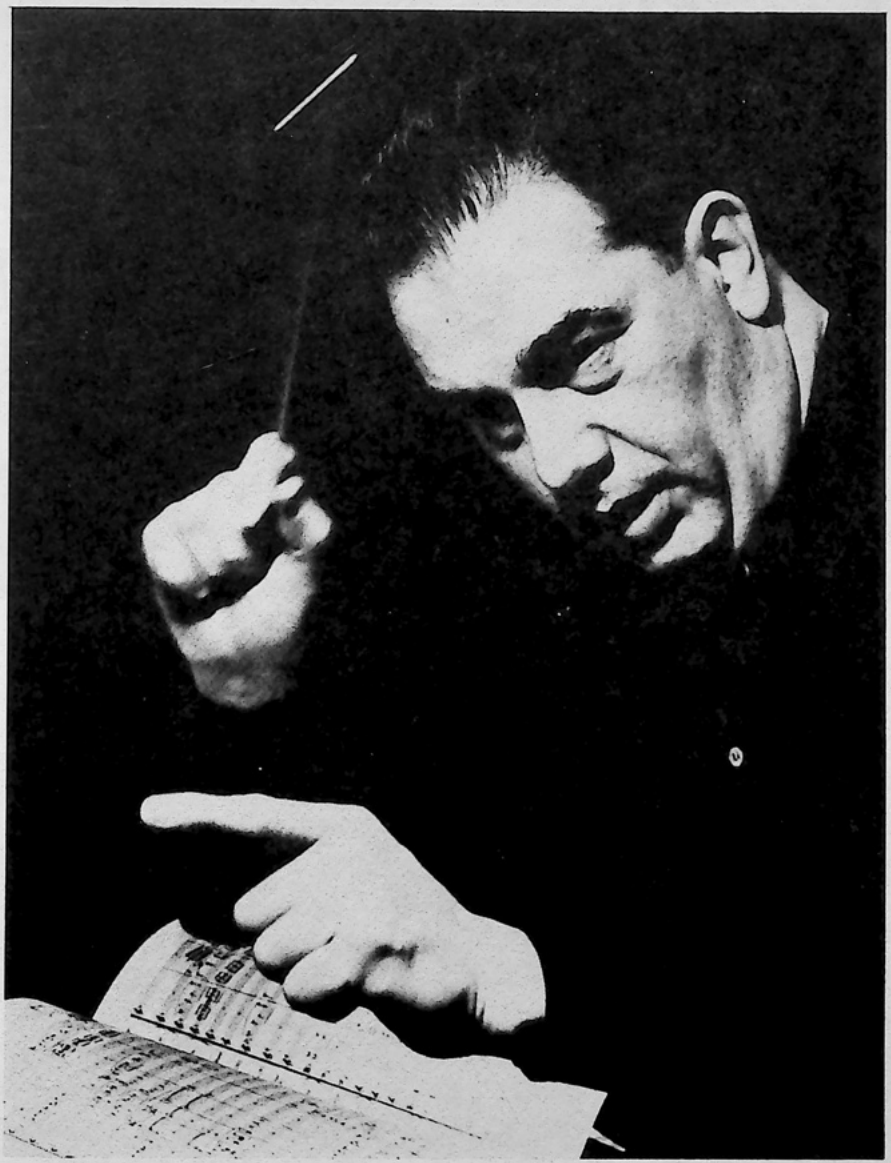
"Was Toscanini's beat difficult to follow?"

"On the contrary. I found this to be the easiest of my tasks, and the most exciting. The music flowed so naturally from his hands, one could scarcely conceive of it being played in any other manner. His stick technique was clear at all times and his gestures were invariably simple and un-fussy."

"What about his proverbial temper?"

"It did explode on many occasions, and he would hurl profanity at the offender in Italian street language, which Bolognini would translate for me—his face red and his head shaking regretfully. But Toscanini's ire was specifically directed at sloppy, careless playing, and indifference or insensitivity to the music. His devotion to his work was fanatical, and when he committed one of his extremely rare errors, he would crucify himself.

"The music-making was magnificent. The orchestra was composed of some of the finest players around, and I believe that Rose and I were by far its youngest members. The existing recordings



Shumsky conducting.

Shumsky conducting.

often do not justly represent the extraordinary stature of many of the performances. And the rehearsals were even greater! Toscanini would painstakingly achieve his desired results in the rehearsals. For him, it was as if the actual performance had already taken place."

At Primrose's invitation, Shumsky joined in playing string quartets with violinist Josef Gingold, the cellist, Harvey Shapiro, and the violist; an association that lasted over two years. All were members of the NBC Symphony. The group broadcasted regularly over NBC in New York, with Earl Wild at times collaborating in piano quintets. RCA-Victor later recorded several performances by the ensemble. We asked Shumsky why he decided to leave the NBC Symphony.

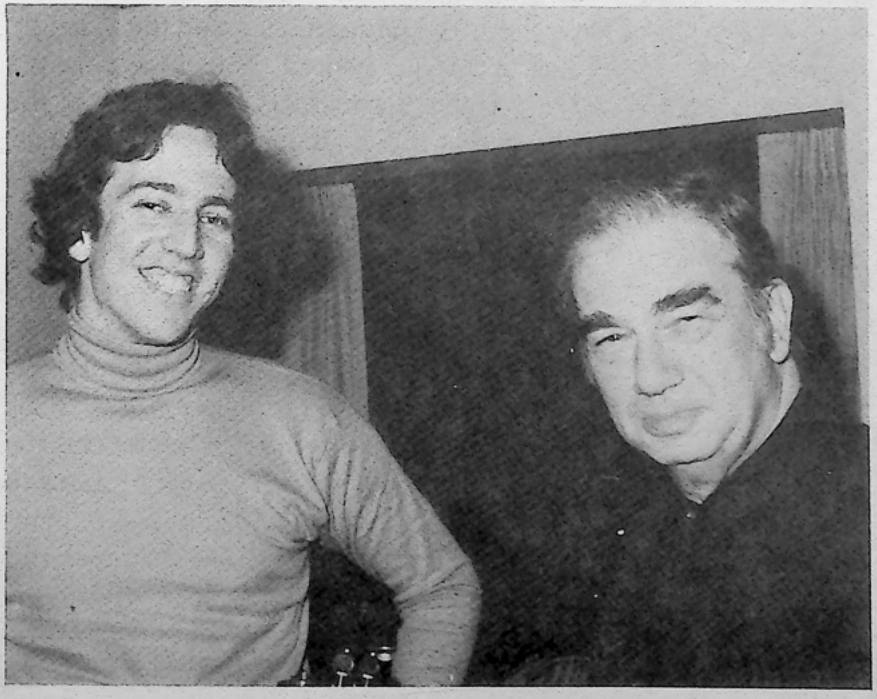
"I believe there is a time for everything. After two-and-a-half years with the orchestra, I was anxious to resume a solo career, and had been offered a post as a member of the violin faculty at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. I left the orchestra and the

quartet at the same time. It proved as important to leave Toscanini's influence as it was to have come under his hypnotic spell. True, I had learned a tremendous amount, but I felt it was time I began listening to my own 'inner voices'.

Some time previously, in his studio on the fifth floor of the Juilliard School, we had had the opportunity of watching Shumsky teach. The room, furnished impersonally with a sofa, several chairs, a desk, a grand piano and a mirror, faced Broadway, but no street noises intruded. His students, who played in turn, were Ida Bieler, Ida Kavafian and Philip Setzer. The latter's parents, both members of the Cleveland Orchestra, had been Shumsky's pupils at the Peabody Conservatory.

The time sped rapidly as the gifted youngsters played such things as the Paganini Concerto No. 1 and Caprice No. 17, the Glazunov Concerto and the Ysaÿe Solo Sonatas, Nos. 1 and 3. Shumsky in dark slacks and a black turtleneck, alternately just listened, played piano accompaniments, or picked up his own violin to illustrate various technical details.

A 1978 photo of Shumsky with son Eric.

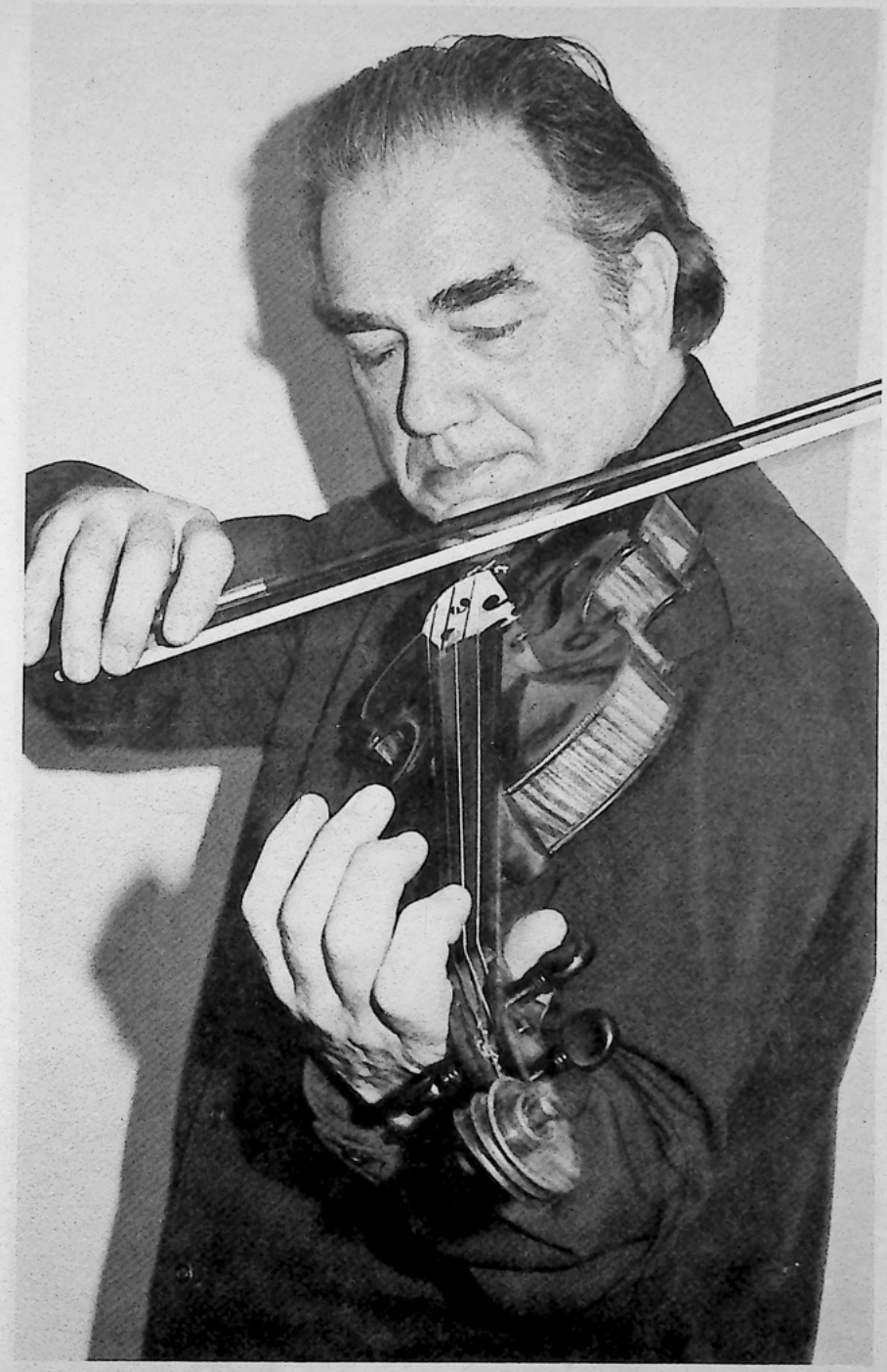


His remarks were revealing. In discussing the Ysaÿe Sonata No. 3, he pointed out that "the introduction can be likened to the impressionism of Debussy's 'La Mer', and advised to "let each note wander into place as if you were describing a misty sunrise. Give the notes time to resound, and let the long line of the phrase evolve at its own momentum."

In the finale of the Glazunov Concerto, he instructed his students to adopt an unusually wide strumming motion in the pizzicati chords, and recommended a relaxed index finger in a brushing movement, rather than a rigid one which would tend to rip the strings and prevent the desired resonance. He cautioned them not to be overly gentle in bowing attack when playing the harmonics. "You must remember that since an artificial harmonic in the interval of a fourth causes the string to vibrate in four equal parts, you are in effect bowing the equivalent of one-fourth of the string length. Therefore, you should bow closer to the bridge. A light fluffy stroke might just miss sending the note into the necessary vibration." Shumsky emphasized that a violinist must always play with the kind of confidence and assurance that gives the music the quality of 'presence'.

He asked one of the girls to step over to the mirror and watch her bow arm as she ran a chromatic figuration high on the E-string. Shumsky pointed out to her that the path of the bow was far too angular in relation to the bridge, a flaw which blurred part of the passage. But he also warned that indiscriminate use of the mirror could be destructive. "It is often useful in analyzing a suspected fault, but far less so in synthesizing a solution. Adjusting a movement before a mirror until it 'looks right' may result in hampering a person's natural movements." He added, "This is one of the areas in which a teacher can do either great good or great harm. The teacher must have objectivity as well as insight, plus much experience in evaluating as opposed to rationalizing according to his own preconceived prejudices. One of our most difficult tasks is the examination of the obvious! Everyone prefers instant solutions to thorny problems, since true analytical thinking can be a very painful process." Shumsky enjoys giving philosophical examples and answers to his students. Our visit to his studio had been most enlightening.

In our discussion at the restaurant, we asked Shumsky how he



Shumsky recorded his prize-winning album of the complete Mozart Violin and Piano Sonatas in 1978.

Shumsky, 1978.

felt about teaching young children to play by rote, as in the Suzuki Method.

He replied, "Yes, for the very beginning student. I taught my son, Eric, many things at a very early age, without resorting to the printed page. Children are apt to listen to themselves more carefully if they are not forced to concentrate on reading notes and musical signs. In fact, I often recommend that my older students work by ear in dealing with certain specific problem.

"For example—a bowing problem can be dealt with by repeating the difficult pattern in different keys, scale-like or arpeggio progressions, whole-tone or chromatic sequences, or even chordal figurations. As the student gains experience, he can devise more imaginative improvisations, until in effect, he has created a miniature étude. This practice—all by ear—can result in astounding gains in bow control."

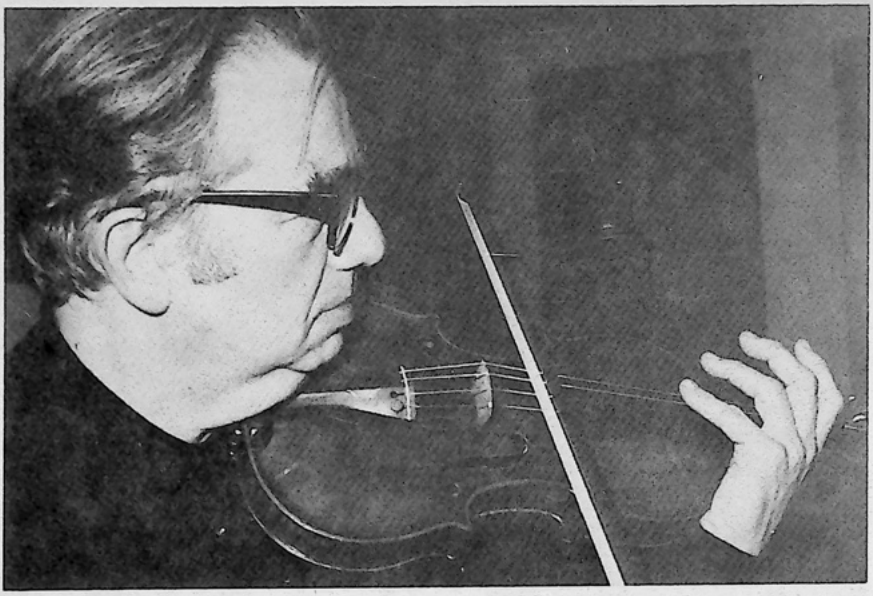
"You seem to have great admiration for improvisational techniques."

"Yes. I believe that the great agility of the fine Gypsy players stems from the fact that their inspired phrases do not emanate from a printed sheet. It's a pity that the art of improvisation has been so largely lost to the performing musician, except, of course, in the field of jazz, where fantastic things often happen spontaneously. The astounding facility of the late jazz violinist, Joe Venuti, is a case in point, though he was by no means an illiterate musician."

Shumsky plays the beautiful Stradivarius named after Pierre Rode, which was used by that master during his long career. "I have included some of his excellent 24 Caprices in my solo recitals from time to time," he said.

The violinist is also a fine violist—another facet of his broad versatility as a musician. We asked for some comments on this phase of his art.

"I have played the viola intermittently throughout my career. It began with my desire to exchange instruments while playing quartets. I fell in love with the rich, dark viola sound, and began to take an interest in the viola's small but rewarding literature. Eventually, I decided to employ the viola as a means of adding a change of color in an unaccompanied violin recital. It is entirely possible that I was the first to pioneer this type of program. At my first such recital at the old Juilliard School, I featured Bach's solo violin Par-



Shumsky, 1979.

tita and Hindemith's first viola solo sonata and Bach's 1st violin Partita." He grinned broadly. "I recall how I stopped in at this same Chinese restaurant for lunch, and my fortune cookie warned, 'beware of strange new ventures'."

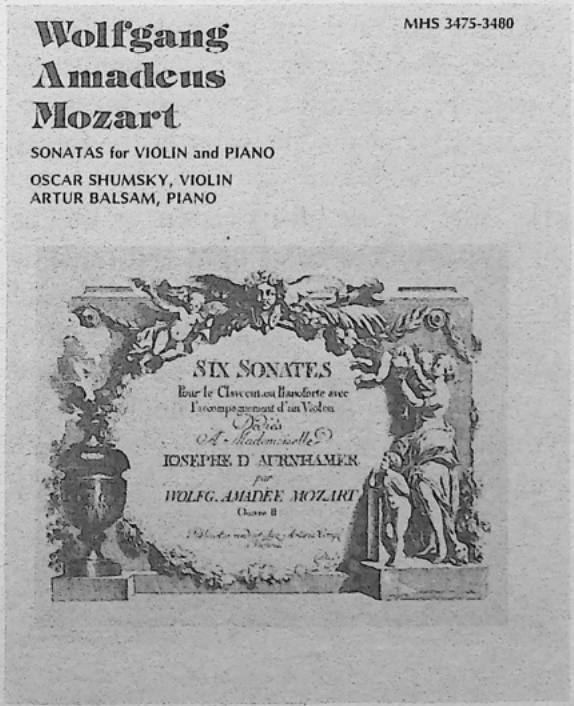
"Do you use the same basic left hand position on viola as with the violin?"

"No. I use a different angle. My viola, a splendid Gabrielli model, made in Berlin by Anders during the 1920's, is large—17 inches in length. When I change from violin to viola, my left hand is set more at a right angle to the strings, almost like the square-ish position of a classical guitarist. The thumb is held more toward the underside of the neck. My aim is to minimize the stretch of the fourth finger, which is placed squarely over the note, and to utilize the backward extension capability. Also, since viola strings do not respond as easily as those of a violin, I advise greater bow speed, bow contact toward the fingerboard, and a more delicate touch."

In arranging our meeting with Shumsky, we had alerted him to the fact that we wished to learn some of his thoughts about basic technique and pedagogy. Inasmuch as he does not believe in discussing such serious matters 'off the top of his head,' he had come prepared to deliver certain of his ideas with exactitude. We asked him to start with the subject of teaching. He began–

"Our time has been characterized as an 'Age of Anxiety'. And it is also an age of over-analysis and over-teaching. Never before has so much information been available to so many. The result is that we are all too often over-informed, and thus, confused. At the period when I taught my first student, when I was 15, I became especially interested in the role that scientific application could play in violin pedagogy. Steinhausen's 'Physiology of Bowing', Ortmann's works on the physical and physiological aspects of 'Piano Technique,' and the ideas of Hodgson, were known only to comparatively few. Ševčik still flooded the music shelves, and the works of Dounis had just infiltrated the Curtis library, only to lie dormant for several years, unread. Countless Kreutzer Etudes continued to waft into the ether.

"As time passed, scientific applications mellowed, somewhat, and became less black and white. One realized that teaching was still an art. Nonetheless, it is reassuring to learn, objectively, that certain physical and physiological facts are unalterable, as for example: that the bow actually moves in graceful arcs, never straight lines—that vibrato speed is pretty much limited to a cycle of six wobbles per second—that starts and stops, as well as the width of the vibrato, influence the sound far more than mere speed.



Shumsky is a recording luminary! His first two albums garnered awards. He disced the Bach* Solo Sonatas and Partitas *and Mozart's* Violin and Piano Sonatas *for the* Musical Heritage Society *label.

"Today we have a wealth of information that can help prevent a teacher from making erroneous assumptions and from frustrating a student by demanding things that are impractical, or even impossible. Remember, no one ever has enough *real* knowledge, and a teacher should realize, above all, that the aim of education is to promote 'activity of thought on the part of the pupil and inspire a receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling.'

"I wish I could claim the latter words as my own, but they emanate from Alfred North Whitehead, and to me, they are profoundly significant. To teach is not to indoctrinate. A worshipping disciple who cannot be guided or stimulated to think on his own, is of no use to himself, and a distinct nuisance to a conscientious teacher."

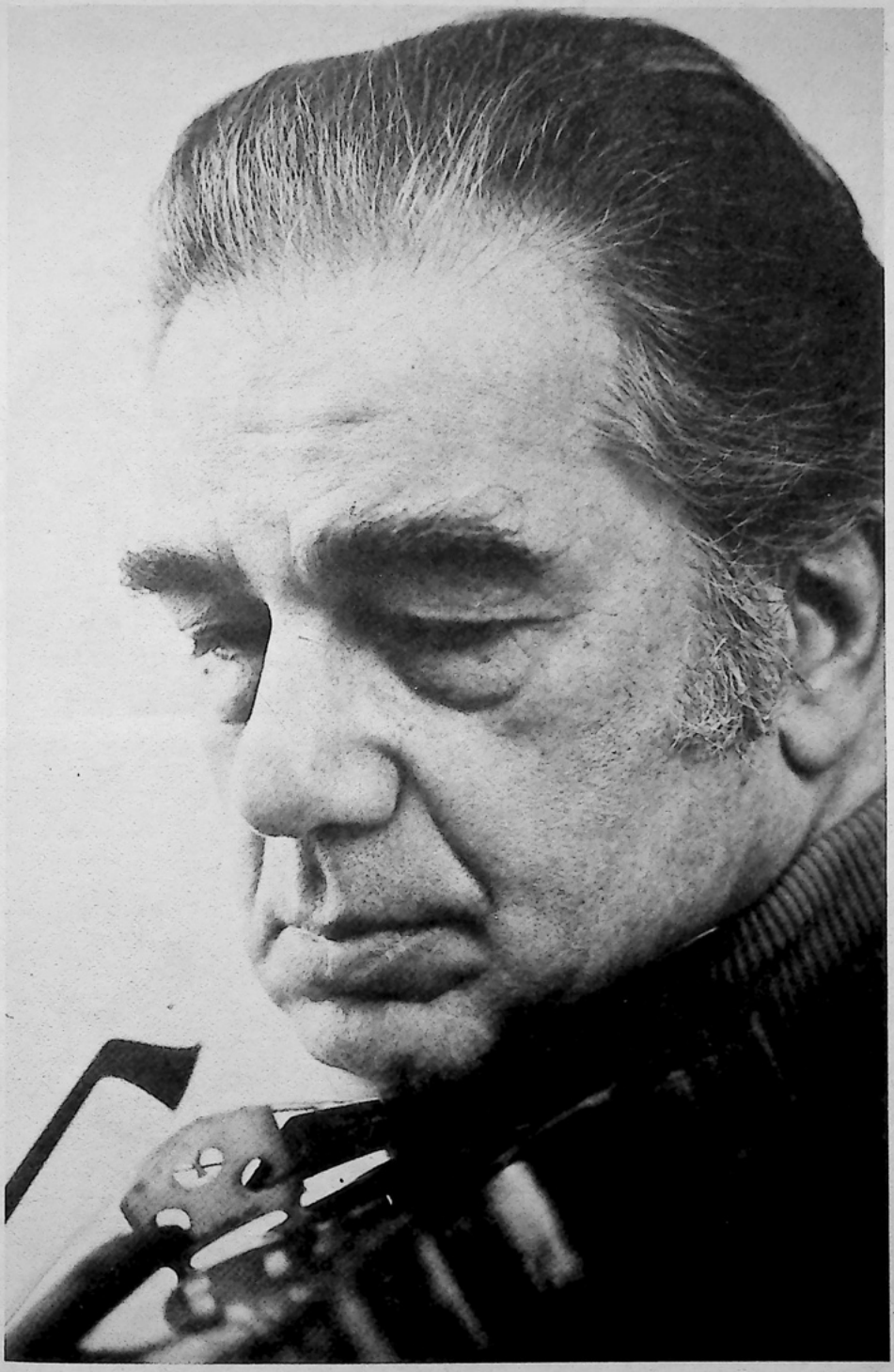
What are your recommendations for proper practicing?"

"Advising a student on 'correct' practice procedure is a serious responsibility for a teacher. Learning how to practice is at least half of the educational process. No one of us is ever above the rigorous demands of playing in time and in tune. However facile one's technique may be, it is always subject to these two basic requirements. But mere constant repetition of difficult passages is not productive of best results. Correct finger movements are extremely important.

"For example—suppose one is practicing a simple scale-like pattern. Practice S-L-O-O-O-W-L-Y, we are admonished! Well!—Good! But *how* slowly? Practice that is overly-slow can actually be detrimental. And what about the character of the finger movements?

"My advice is to watch carefully the lifting action as well as that of dropping. All movements should be as light and rapid as possible, with no straining or hammering. And exercises should never be practiced with a dry, or unpleasant sound. As for vibrato, I do not advocate indiscriminate finger 'wobbling', but the hand should be in position to vibrate at any movement, should this be desired. Balance between the left hand and the bow arm is of prime importance in practicing as well as performing. If one makes ugly

Shumsky, 1979.



When Paul Paradise visited Shumsky to take the photos accompanying this chapter, he also asked Shumsky for some "technical" photographs showing hand positions, etc. These photos show him using the classical positions familiar to all Auer students.

"Études should never be played like mechanical exercises."

sounds when practicing, you may be sure his sound will not be beautiful in performance. Do not think, like in the fairy tale, this toad will ever be transformed into a Prince Charming."

"How do you approach the study of Études?"

"They should never be played like mechanical exercises. Each one should be played for the essential music that is in it; the teacher should inspire the student to seek this out. And I recommend that the student do a great deal of playing in the field of sheer fiddle music—Wieniawski, Vieuxtemps, Sarasate, and the superb old masters such as Tartini, Locatelli, Veracini, Leclair, Corelli, Biber et al."

We sought out Shumsky's ideas pertaining to fingerings and bowings. He responded with a short, rather droll anecdote on the former.

"A pupil of mine was assigned a new work to be prepared for a lesson a few weeks hence. The following week the student asked if I would lend her my personal copy of the music so that she could copy the fingerings. Instead, I took her own copy, selected a passage at random, and instructed her to devise as many different finger combinations as she could, no matter how far-fetched they might be. I then asked that all fingering choices be marked, in light pencil one atop the other.

"It was soon clear that some were illogical, and these were immediately erased. The remaining choices were left for her further consideration. I assured the young lady that in this way she would learn to devise her own fingerings without having to rely on those of her teacher, or some editor. Moreover, the fingerings would conform to her particular individual characteristics.

"She seemed terribly impressed and thanked me for a 'most informative' lesson. I was elated; I thought I had scored a pedagogical victory. But my triumph was short-lived. 'Mr. Shumsky', she said, 'is there any other pupil of yours who has studied this piece with you and has a fingered copy I may borrow?' Momentarily chastised, I realized once again that many of our young people are quite vocal about 'freedom of choice', but when the chips are down, they are quick to settle for instant security."

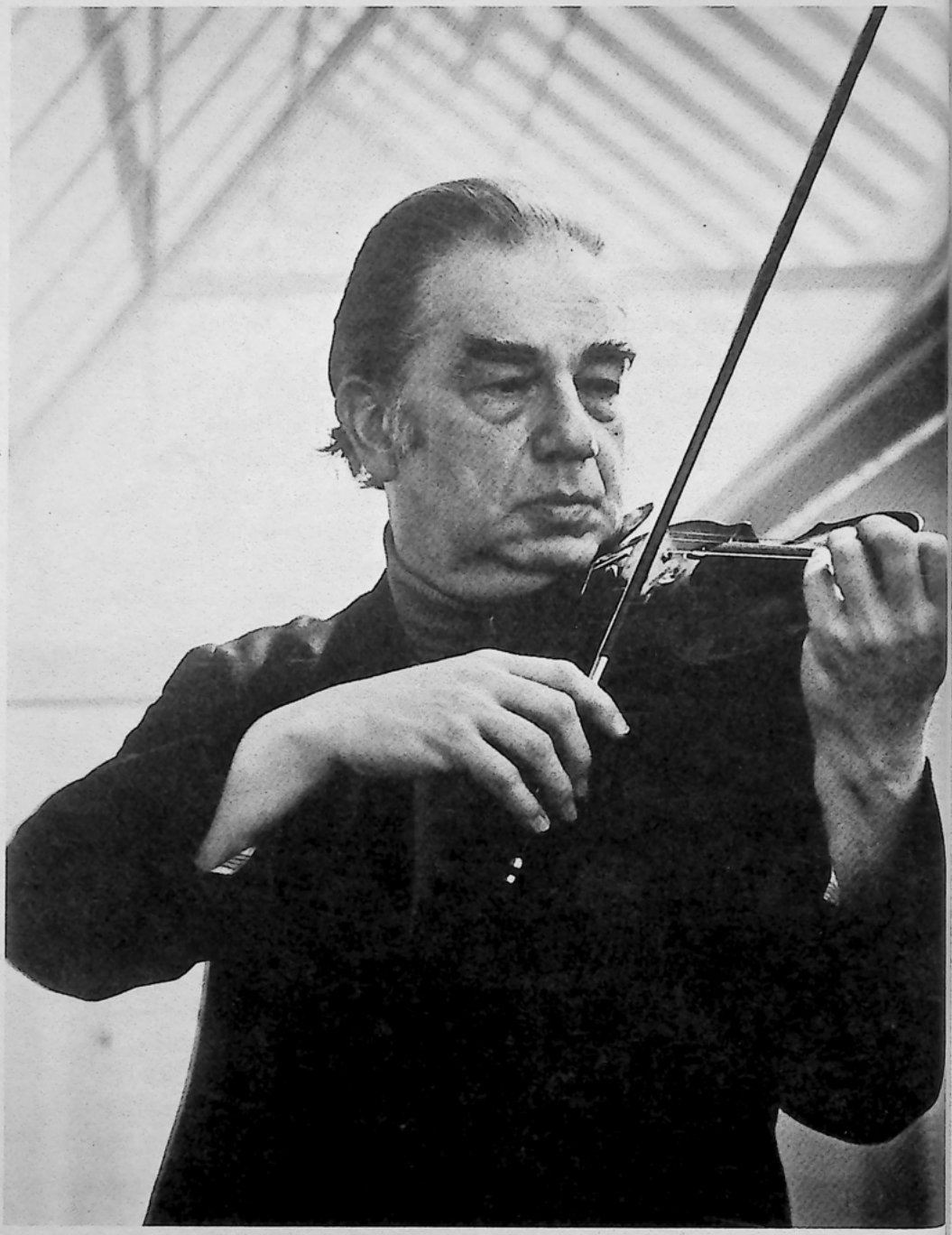
"Do you use your fourth finger a great deal?"

"I do—in scales and in stretches; I even trill with it, a practice not ordinarily done. A strong, flexible fourth finger is an important asset to any violinist."

We then asked Shumsky to speak on the subject of bowing.

"In the course of my teaching through the years," he began, "I have found a far greater number of faulty bow arms than faulty left hands. There is a mystique surrounding the subject of bowing that seems to foster the emergence of even more 'gurus' than India can boast. The bow itself is generally blamed as the main culprit. 'Ah, if only I had a fine Tourte or Voirin', the complainant cries!

"I happen to own some exceptional bow specimens, including a fine Tourte and an excellent contemporary bow made for me by the master bow-maker, William Salchow, of New York. I enjoy all



"I have a fine Tourte bow, along with a Salchow, but if I were forced to play with a strange bow, I could make it do anything I wanted."

my bows, some, more than others. However, if I were forced to play with a strange bow, I would soon find out how to make it do my bidding. The basic question is one of a balanced hold. This is difficult to explain in words; it requires demonstration. And an incorrectly balanced bow-hold is a nightmare to correct in one who has had bad habits ingrained for many years.

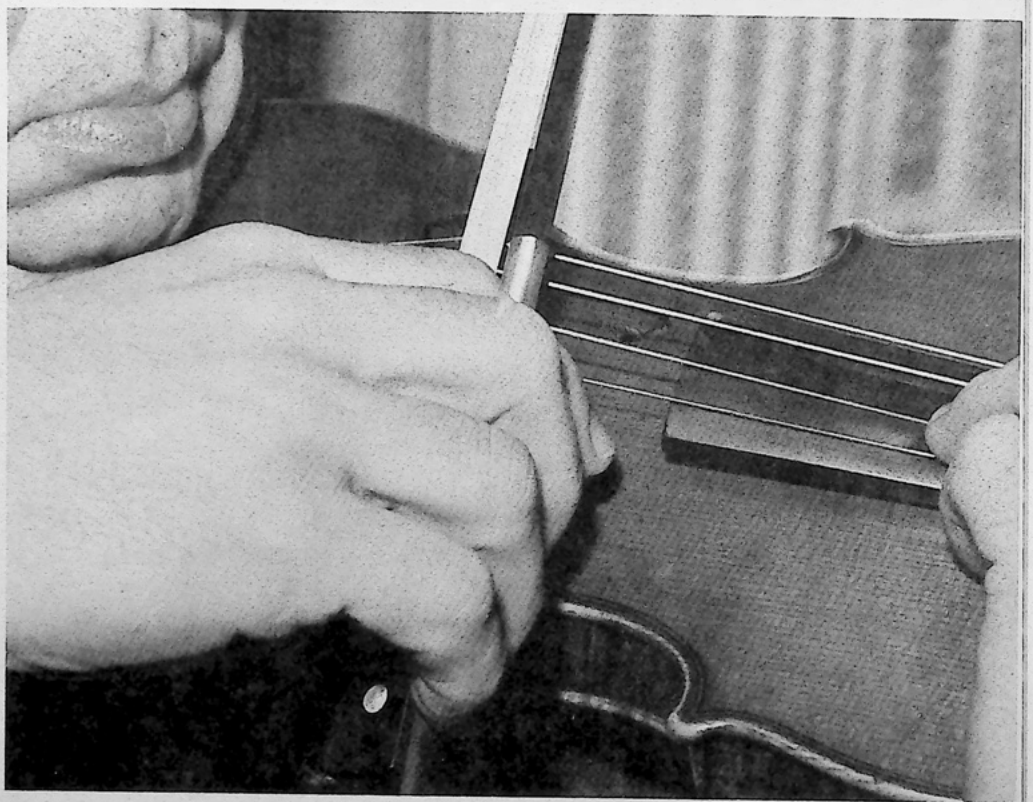
"In such instances, and in fact at all times, I begin by pretending that the subject has never before held a bow. Young children can learn good bowing habits quickly, if they are not inhibited by being coerced into trying to bow in precise straight lines parallel to the bridge. It is more logical to encourage the beginner to bow in natural curves, both around and across the strings. What we call 'straight' in bowing, is in reality a series of shallow arcs. A good way to make the young player alert to the see-saw action of the bow-hand fingers is to have him tap the string with the bow in one spot at the upper middle. This gives him a fine example of a properly balanced hold. Encouraging him to hold the bow much higher up on the stick at a point where the bow 'balances' and using a very small stroke is also useful. Especially for beginnners.

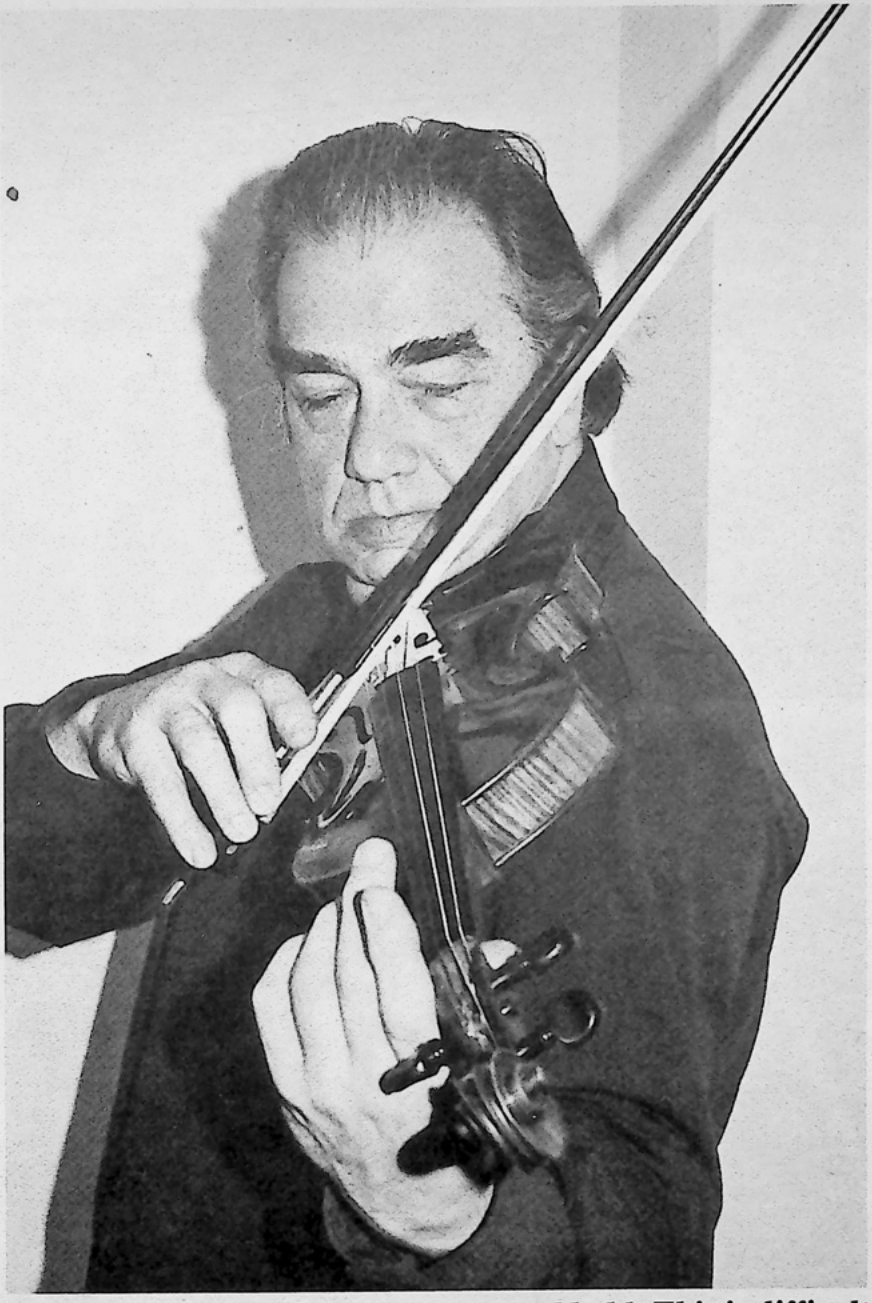
"We should not encourage coping with the natural top-heaviness of the bow by a stiffened or too deep hold—that is, past the second joint of the index finger. Instead, an opposite leverage should balance the stick like the yard-arm of a chemical scale that has the weights at one end and the materials at the other. A proper stance is most important. The entire torso should be free to shift and rotate, so that the upper arm can be correctly suspended. This enables both arm and bow to shift easily and rapidly to any spot on the violin. In my opinion, the ability to feel the contact of the bow on the string through the fingers is vital."

The mustard-green soup and a sizeable menu of delicious Chinese dishes had long since been dispatched, but we still had a few topics left for Shumsky's discussion.

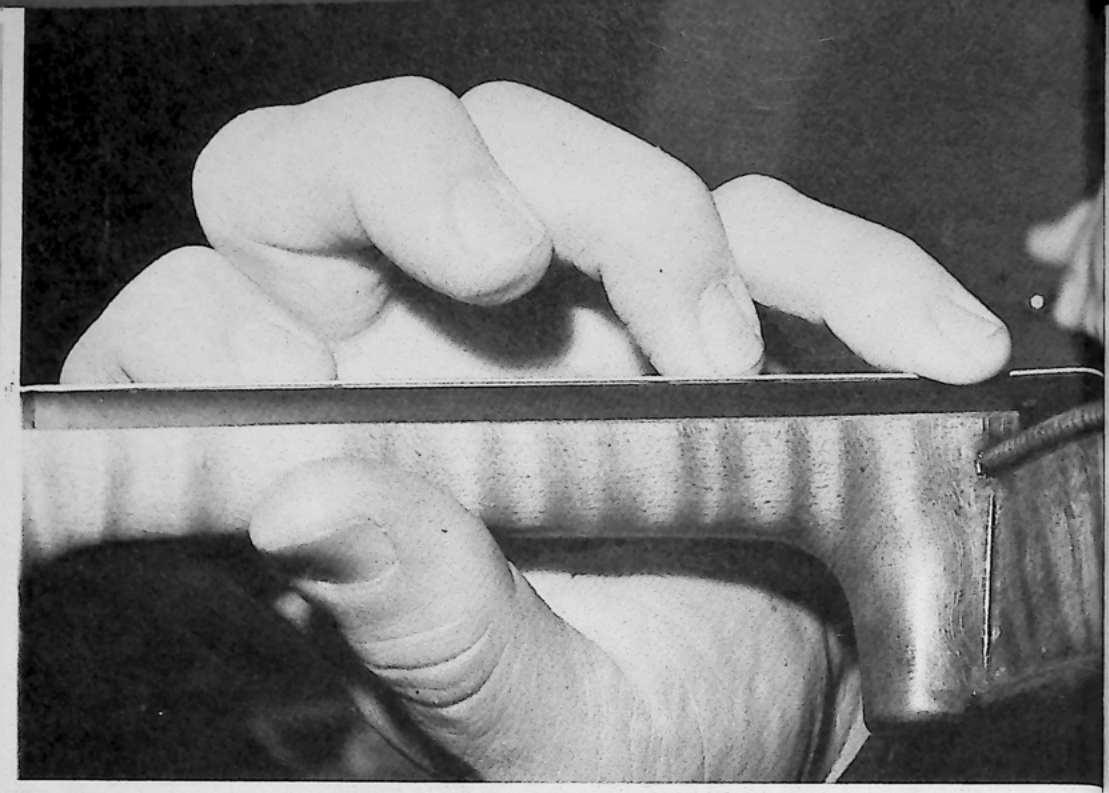
"What do you think of so-called Master Classes?" we asked.

"I have found the value of this practice greatly overrated, and in some cases, even injurious. First let me emphasize that it requires a strong ego to survive the effect of public criticism. The large audiences often present at such classes, chaired by some well-known performer, can easily intimidate many of our more sensitive and introspective students. To me, the old argument that the stu-





"The basic question is one of balanced hold. This is difficult to explain in words; it requires a demonstration. (See accompanying photos.) And an incorrectly balanced grip is a nightmare to correct in one who has had bad habits ingrained for many years.



dent needs this sort of pressure if he or she is ever to become a public performer, is completely wrong.

"A student needs encouragement, not censure, and a teacher should never send a student onstage to perform before he is adequately prepared. I regard it as an act of cruelty to subject a student to public criticism, and sometimes, ridicule, at the hands of a stranger. I often wonder how many potentially fine players are inhibited by such exposure at a crucial stage of their development.

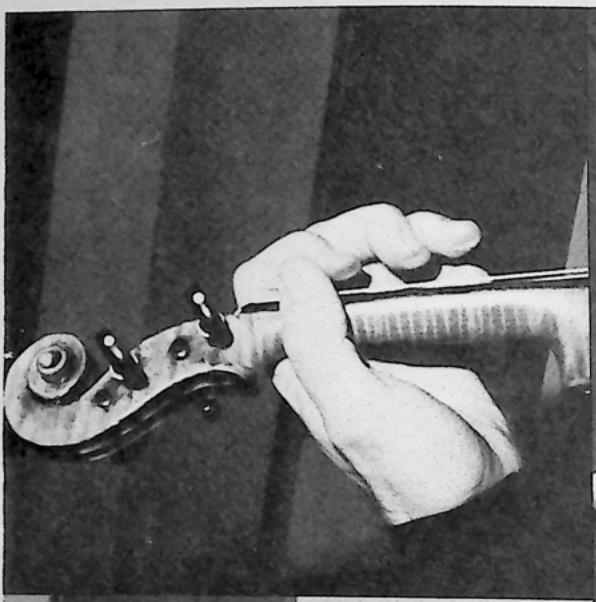
"All criticism should be constructive and take place in the intimate confines of the studio between student and teacher, with at best, no more than a few student-colleagues present. True, I have heard some stimulating remarks from well-known artists who have visited my studio during a lesson, remarks that have inspired the student. But in the final analysis, the real value of a great artist is vested in his performance, and seldom in anything he has to say about his own performing. With apologies to Goethe, I would like to stress that if music could be expressed through words, there would be little need for the music."

Since Shumsky, in recent years, has devoted much time and energy to conducting, we asked him for a few comments on this phase of his work.

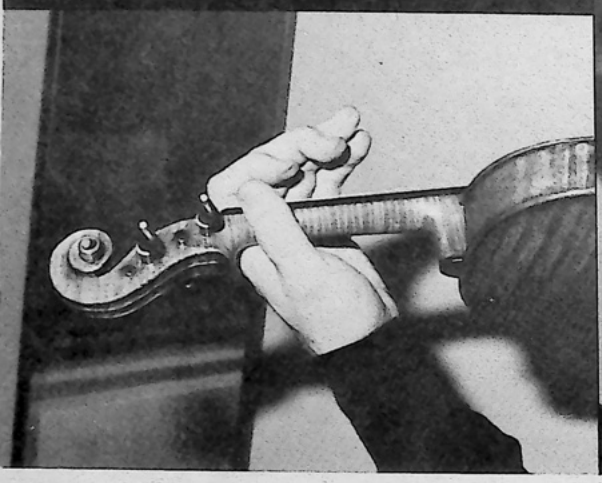
"I enjoy conducting immensely," he stated, and try to combine this with my violin playing whenever feasible. You know, it is a fascinating adventure to approach a masterwork like the Brahms D-major Concerto from the three-sided view of performer, teacher and conductor. This exposure can broaden one's musical perspective enormously.

"I have had many gratifying experiences, such as performing the Brahms and Barber Concertos with the excellent orchestra I conducted for ten seasons—the Colonial Symphony of Morris County, New Jersey. However, I am careful never to carry this indulgent nepotism too far, and have engaged many outstanding violinists to perform with my orchestras.

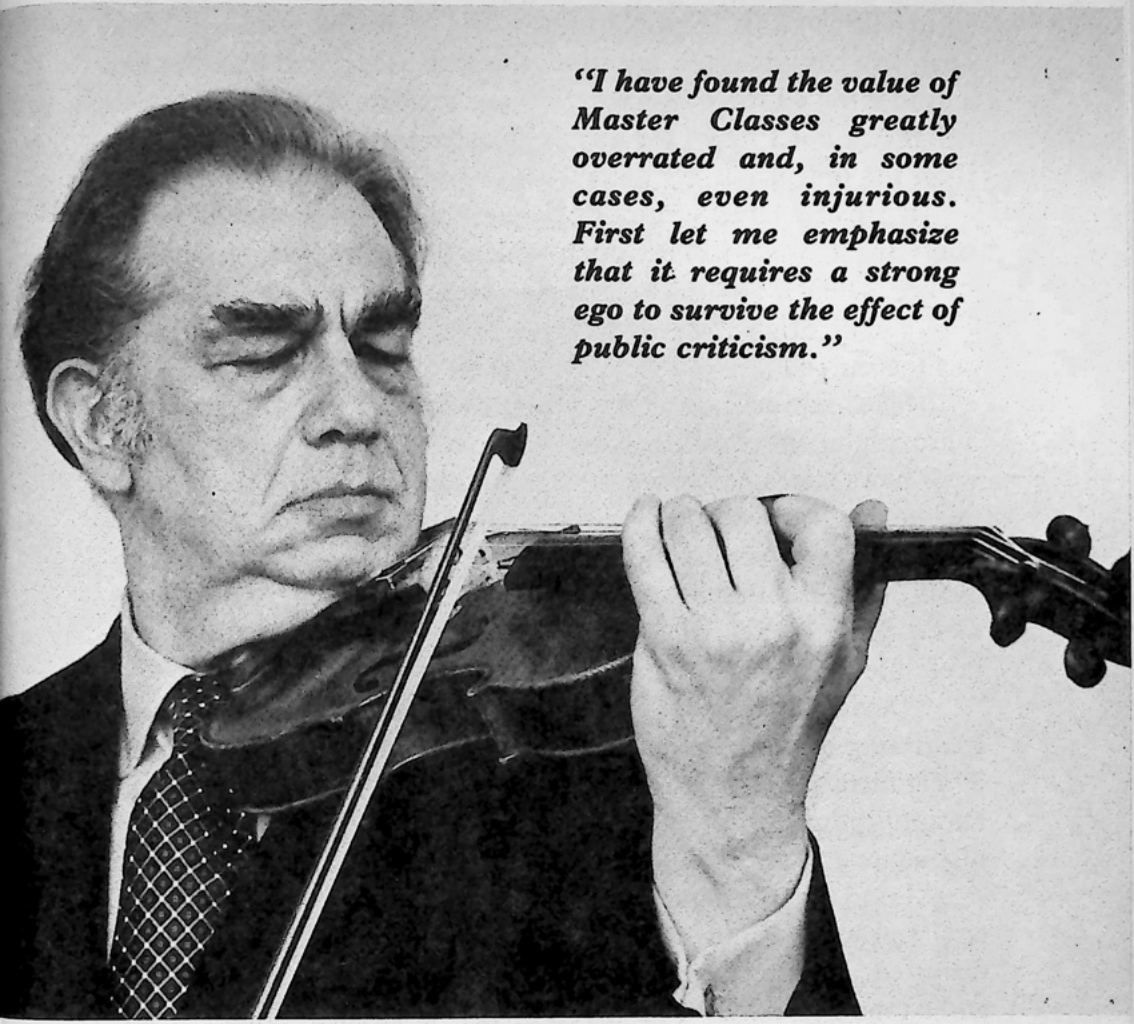
Shumsky is very analytical of every action and reaction in violin playing. The placement of the fingers both on and off the string is important. Note the placement of the fourth finger in the photo on the bottom of the facing page. It seems to be resting on the top of the violin, while in the top photo it seems to extend over the G string.



In the first position Shumsky's left thumb seems to choke the violin—a practice acceptable to some artists, but deemed controversial by others.



Shumsky's bow grip is unorthodox, but it works well for him.


"I have found the value of Master Classes greatly overrated and, in some cases, even injurious. First let me emphasize that it requires a strong ego to survive the effect of public criticism."

"Playing Baroque and Classical concertos with a chamber-sized orchestra without a conductor, or as sometimes is the case, without the 'interference' of a conductor, gives me much pleasure. But when the orchestration is more dense and complex, it is necessary to have the collaboration of a competent, sympathetic conductor. It is an exhilarating feeling to be able to rely implicitly on the security of the orchestra, to enjoy the luxury of being free to concentrate on violinistic details, and to revel in the give and take of sheer music-making with a really fine conductor."

"Have you ever tried to perform a difficult contemporary work in the dual role of violinist and conductor?"

Shumsky laughed. "Believe it or not, I had the audacity to perform Hindemith's 'Kammermusik, No. 4' in this manner. I had complete confidence in my admirable musicians, and together, we surmounted all the challenges without mishap. The audience was delighted, but I may have acquired at least a handful of grey hair from the ordeal."

We had arrived at our final question—the efficacy of music contests. It was a subject upon which Shumsky had particularly strong feelings.

"Competitions," he said, "have been around for a long time, but the burgeoning of this phenomenon on an international scale in the past few decades alarms me! It has become a spectator sport. Throughout the world legions of violinists, cellists et al., armed with bows instead of swords and spears, are marched into an arena one by one to do battle with the other gladiators. Save for the difference that no spilled blood is visible and no gladiator is put to death, only brought near to it, at least psychologically—there seems little to choose between these Armageddons and the brutalities of ancient Rome's Coliseum.

"David Oistrakh once complained to me that contests were frustrating to him. 'No sooner am I through with the preparation of a student for one contest, than he is back in the classroom with an application for another. When can I have a period devoid of distractions to teach as I should'? he implored.

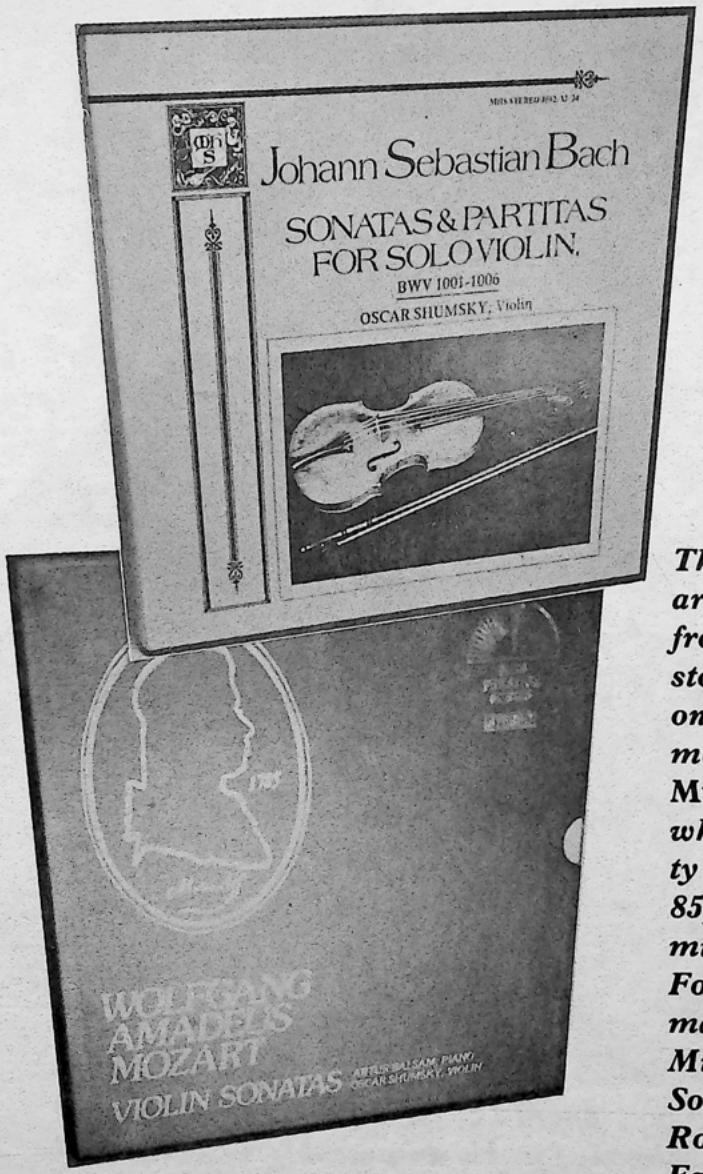
"I find that the demands of competitions subtly alter the standards and aims of our young performers so that values are badly distorted. Teachers begin to emphasize flashy technical display and a tone that is intended to be hurled like a guided missile at the furthermost seated auditor in the upper balcony. Contests are seldom, if ever won by a poetic player who gives a sensitive, introspective performance of a Debussy Sonata.

"So we find that the contest arena, which is purported to be an altar wherein true excellence is worshipped, is, in actuality, a crucible in which new, and often false values, are coined in the service of manufacturing 'winners'. The medium has become the message! And the saddest consequence of all, can be the interruption of the normal development of a genuinely gifted performer who is thrust into the savage mêlée before he is ready.

"I am often asked by a prospective entrant, 'what other way do

I have for the attainment of a career'? My only answer is, that instead of becoming a chronic contestant, adjust your sights to becoming a first-class instrumentalist and musician. There have never been too many of them! This has always been my creed."

On this note our discussion with Shumsky came to a close. Who could deny that this superb violinist, pedagogue and conductor had monumentally achieved and surpassed his stated aims?



These records are not available from record stores. They are only available to members of* Musical Heritage *which is a society of about 85,000 classical music lovers. For more information write to Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724.

I loved Feuermann, whom I considered to be the greatest cellist who ever lived, for his impeccable instrumental command.

Zara Nelsova

Zara Nelsova was born in Winnipeg, Canada. Her paternal grandfather was a well-known opera singer in Tsarist Russia, and her family patrimony included a number of professional musicians. Her father, a graduate of the Petrograd Conservatory, was a professional flutist and Nelsova's first teacher. He began her training when she was 4½ years old, on a viola converted into a tiny cello.

At 12, Nelsova made her public debut, playing the Lalo Cello Concerto with the London Symphony under Sir Malcolm Sargent. By the time she was 16, she was touring North America, Europe, Africa and Australia with the Canadian Trio, a group started by her father, which included her sisters, Ida, violin, and Anna, piano.

The family moved to London where Nelsova attended the Frognol School in Hampstead. Her application to the Royal Academy of Music was rejected because of her youth. Nelsova then studied privately with the Hungarian pedagogue, Dezso Mahalek, and subsequently with Herbert Wallens of the London Violoncello School. She was heard by John Barbirolli, himself a cellist, who taught her and introduced her to Pablo Casals, with whom she studied for several summers in Prades. In her 20's, she also studied with Emanuel Feuermann and Gregor Piatigorsky. She made her New York recital debut in 1942 at Town Hall.

Nelsova is acclaimed one of the world's leading virtuosi of the cello and has appeared as soloist with major orchestras and conductors on all the continents. In 1966 she was the first cellist from North America to tour the Soviet Union.

In 1949 Ernest Bloch invited Nelsova to record his "Schelomo" with him; two years later she recorded Samuel Barber's Concerto under the composer's baton. She commissioned and premiered both the Sonata by Alex Haieff and the Concerto by Hugh Wood.

In between international touring commitments, Nelsova gives master classes throughout the United States and Britain. She has been Artist-in-Residence at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, is visiting Artist-Teacher at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, has received both the Canadian Centennial Medal of the Confederation "in recognition of valuable service to the nation," and the Canadian Silver Jubilee Medal.

Her instrument is the priceless 1726 Stradivarius, known as the "Marquis de Corboron," and nicknamed, "Tony," given to her in 1960 by her friend, an amateur cellist, Mrs. Audrey Melville.

Our discussion with Nelsova took place at her New York apartment overlooking Central Park, where she has been living since 1961. The living room of her beautifully furnished home contains an elegant grand piano and comprehensive stereo equipment; the walls are decoratively covered with a diversity of oils and sketches, ranging from a kaleidoscopic Ives collage to a saucy specimen of late Picasso erotica. One immediately senses the personality of the lady herself; her penchant for musical good taste and refinement liberally tinctured with glints of imaginative extroversion and ardent romantic flair.

We soon discovered that Nelsova has a hearty sense of humor, and our discussion was punctuated with her bright laughter. She communicates easily and is willing to discuss practically any subject except one—the date of her birth. She considers this 'top secret' and prides herself on the fact that this information does not appear in any article or musical compendium. However, the perceptive reader of this chapter, be he so curious (or perhaps so ungallant) as to insist upon knowing, should have no particular difficulty in divining her approximate age from her own recital of her life and career. We asked about the early years of her cello study.

"I owe it all to my father," she said. "He was a flutist in the Winnipeg Symphony. Thwarted in his own musical career, he was committed to achieving fame through his children. When I was only four-and-a-half, he borrowed a small cello from a colleague and brought it home for me. I can still remember how he awakened me on a winter's day and presented it to me. I sat on the edge of the bed, the hard springs pressing into my little bottom, shaking both from excitement and the cold.

"I took it from him and immediately perceived that it was too bulky for me to handle. It felt like a mountain. I began to cry. 'Father, this is too big'. He consoled me, took back the cello and in a few days returned with a viola that was equipped with an end pin. Thus my career as a cellist started."

"Did you always aspire to become a cellist?"

"No. I had a secret passion to become a ballerina, but by the time I was 12 I had grown far too large, and regretfully gave up my dream. But I was practically ordained to be a cellist from birth—even before. You see, my father was a great friend and admirer of the old, famous Cherniavsky Trio, and had determined to

Zara Nelsova: "I owe it all to my father. He was a flutist in the Winnipeg (Canada) Orchestra."

Zara Nelsova was honored by the British Royal Academy of Music with the loan of a Stradivari cello for her life-long use. During her 1978 concert on BBC in London, Nelsova was greeted by a group all playing Strads. From left to right: Kenneth Sillito, Ralph Holmes, Nelsova, Max Gilbert and Colin Sauer.

forge a similar career for his own offspring. When one older sister took up the violin, and the other, the piano, I was automatically assigned the cello. My lone brother was not a musician."

"Did you practice much at the beginning?"

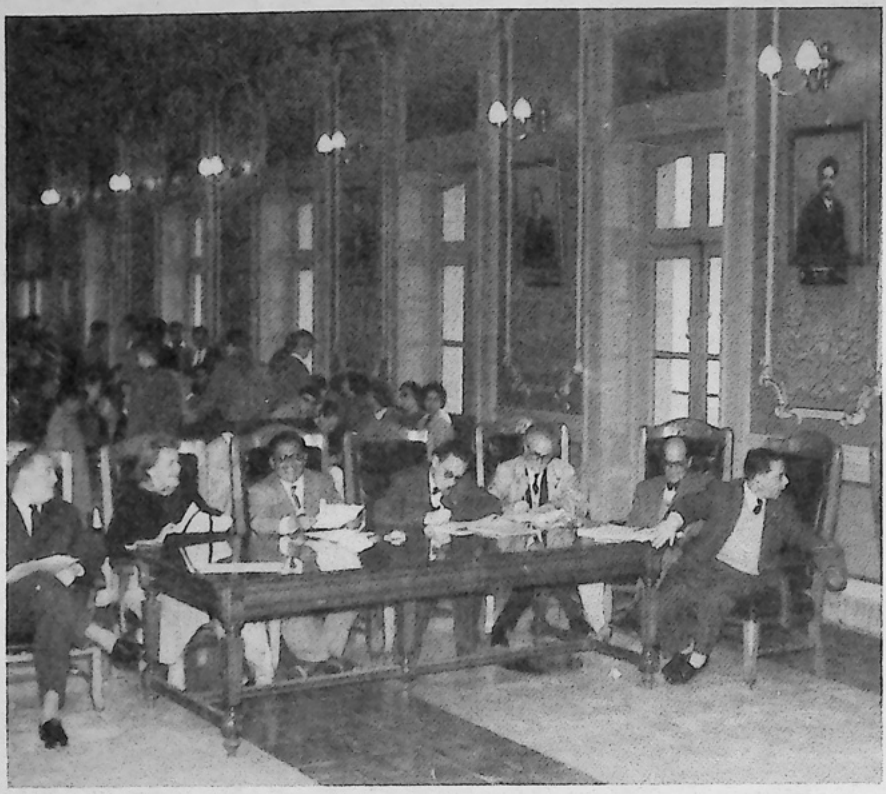
"Yes, I did. At six, I practiced two hours a day, and before long was practicing six hours a day under the tutelage of my father. In fact, each of the Nelsova sisters practiced in a different corner of the room. We were permitted five minutes rest on the hour. I developed my powers of concentration at that early age. I can remember how I would look out of the window, envious of the other children going to play with their sleds and toboggans. Once I was so angry, I jabbed holes with a safety pin into my copy of 'Prayer'—I still have it," Nelsova added wistfully. "Yet, without the iron discipline imposed by my father, I could never have accomplished what I did. Yes, father was a severe taskmaster, but

thanks to him, my technical foundation was superb. I never had to 'unlearn' or change anything as do so many young cellists. How lucky I was!

"I mastered études at an early age and was exposed to the 'thumb position' right from the start. My heart goes out to those young players who are inflicted with six or seven wasted years of bad habits due to inferior teaching. My father taught me bowing by having me emulate his breathing exercises on the flute. Incidentally, I believe pupils should be taught the thumb position as soon as they can hold the bow properly and have the pitch of an octave in their ear. You would be surprised at how often students come to me who have to 'hitch-hike' into the upper positions because they have not been taught the thumb position. In my own teaching, I do everything I can to help people develop their technical foundation. After all, a teacher must know how to properly and profitably practice himself before he can impart this to his students."

Nelsova during a break in judging the Casals Competition, 1959, with some great cellists. Can you find Maurice Eisenberg? Recognize Rostropovich?

Scenes of Nelsova in concert with Daniel Barenboim and the Israel Philharmonic.



The jury of the Casals Competition in Jalapa, Mexico (1959).

"Did you continue studying with your father into maturity?"

"No, I had many other teachers, but my father always helped to oversee my practice at home. When I was 10, we moved to London. We were desperately poor. All six of us lived in two rooms, while my father searched for work. I didn't go to school for eight months during this difficult period of resettlement in England."

"What is your general educational background in school attendance?"

"I had, of course, attended school in Winnipeg, and after moving to London, which was rather violent uprooting for me, I was sent to the fashionable Frognal School in Hampstead as soon as my parents could afford to enroll me. This was a school to which daughters of many theatrical, musical and literary personalities were sent. I might add that I found British people to be quite shy and reticent on the person-to-person level, and I have always

wondered if the reason the stage has had such attraction for them is because it represents an outlet through which they can openly express their feelings."

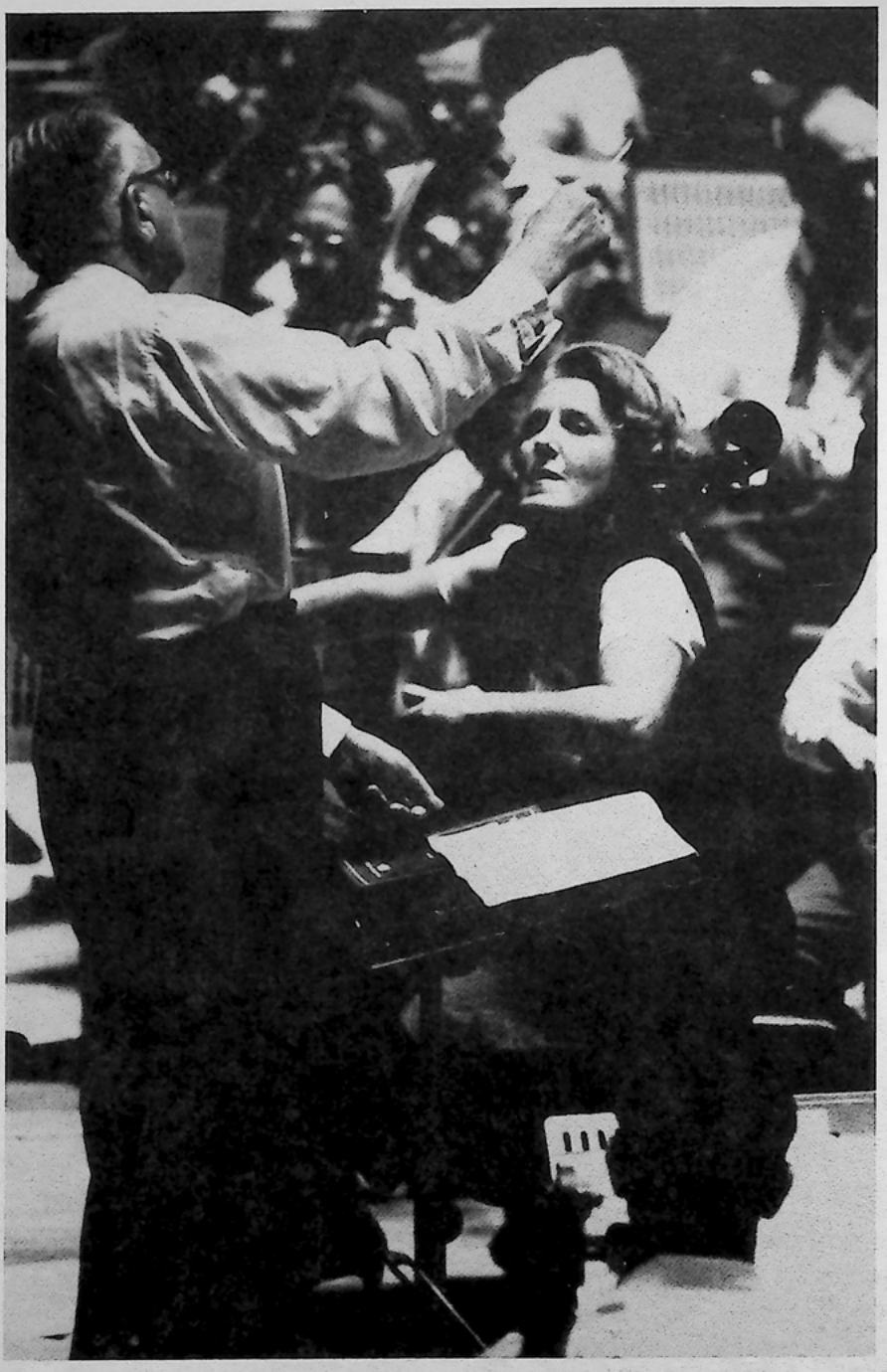
"Up to this point, what were some of the works you studied in your training?"

"Let me see—the concertos of Goltermann, Romberg and Davidoff, the études of Merk, Franchomme and Cossman, the High School Studies of Popper, and above all, the second volume of Grutzmacher, a fabulous book that explores all the problems a fairly advanced cellist may encounter."

"What about your cello studies in London?"

"I studied at the Herbert Wallens School of the Violoncello, where many of England's best known cellists, including John Barbirolli, and, in later years, Jacqueline du Pré, received their early

Nelsova conducts a cello class at Peabody, 1962.



An historic event; Nelsova plays the Walton Cello Concerto with the composer conducting the London Symphony Orchestra, 1968.

training. My application to the Royal Academy of Music had been rejected because I was too young. Before I went to Wallens, I had taken private lessons with the well-known Hungarian pedagogue, Dezso Mahalek.

"But it was Barbirolli, at that juncture, who was my chief influence and inspiration. He gave me lessons surreptitiously, even when I was studying with my other teachers, and changed my entire style of playing. 'Tito', as he was nicknamed, taught me about sound projection. I might add that Mischel Cherniavsky also taught me a tremendous amount about sound production.

"When I was ten, 'Tito' arranged for me to play for Casals in the great man's hotel suite. I played the Saint-Saëns Concerto and Boëllman Variations. Casals was very complimentary, and in later years I studied with him for a time."

"At what age did you make your first public appearances?"

"I made my debut as a full-fledged soloist at 12 in the Lalo Concerto, with Sir Malcolm Sargeant and the London Symphony. Immediately I was invited to play in many of England's stately homes, and Lady Parmoor, mother of Sir Stafford Cripps, presented me with a beautiful Gagliano cello. I became the darling of the'Mayfair set'—my career was indeed on the wing. Meanwhile, I continued working very hard and developed by leaps and bounds."

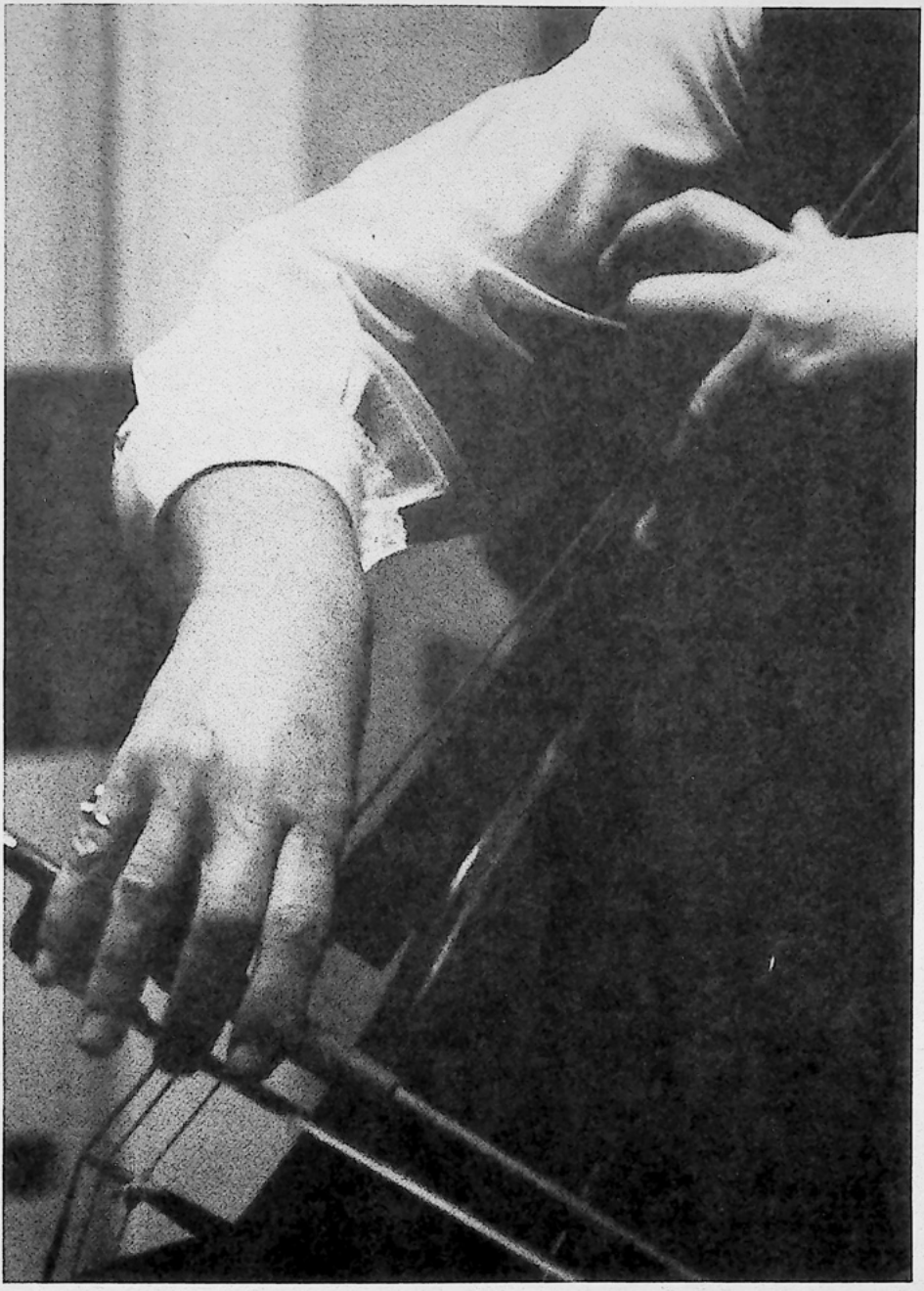
"Were you as yet playing recitals?"

"My recital debut took place in London when I was 16. The program included sonatas by Haydn and Franck, a piece by John Ireland, and the 'Prelude' by Emmanuel Moor, a composer now mostly forgotten, whose music was favored by such giants of the era as Casals and Ysaÿe. This 'Prelude' was the first recording I ever made."

"Did you start concertizing regularly at this point?"

"Yes, but not as a soloist. My father was still obsessed with the idea of a Nelsova Trio in the image of the Cherniavsky Trio. He took my sisters and me on an 18-month tour of Canada, Africa and Australia, under the name of the Canadian Trio. Often we played two or three concerts a day. However, his unbending parental discipline plus the rigors of this schedule proved too much for my sisters, and on our return to England, Anna got married, papa went back to Australia, and I was left to pursue my own career and sup-

Nelsova at a party following a performance with the North Carolina Symphony. The conductor, John Gosling, can be seen in the background holding a glass.



"I do not believe that it is necessary for a pupil to spend long years with any one teacher, provided that pupil is able to absorb the essence of that teacher's knowledge." This photo was taken in Osnabrüch, Germany, 1969.

port my oldest sister, Ida. Our father had forbidden us to have any friends, attend parties or enjoy any social life whatsoever. It was simply too much to endure. Yet, without my father's constant interest and supervision, I probably never would have attained the career I have today."

"How were you able to continue after you were left in this predicament at so young an age?"

"We managed to get along until the war broke out. Then Ida and I went back to Canada and settled in Toronto. Stokowski heard me and invited me to join his All-American Youth Orchestra in its year-long tour of North and South America."

"Would you tell us about your studies with Casals?"

"I studied with him for several summers in Prades, where he had settled in voluntary exile from Franco Spain. At first he lived in the tiny shack of a concierge. He had accepted only one or two pupils at that time; I believe Bernard Greenhouse was with him. Eisenberg had studied with Casals earlier.

"My relatively short time with Casals was well spent. We worked on the Dvorak, Schumann and Haydn Concerti, and Strauss' 'Don Quixote'. He asked me to select my favorite Bach Solo Suite for study. I picked No. 6, which I consider the most difficult. He asked why I chose that one. 'Because it is so joyous and bright,' I answered."

"Did you have any other masters after Casals?"

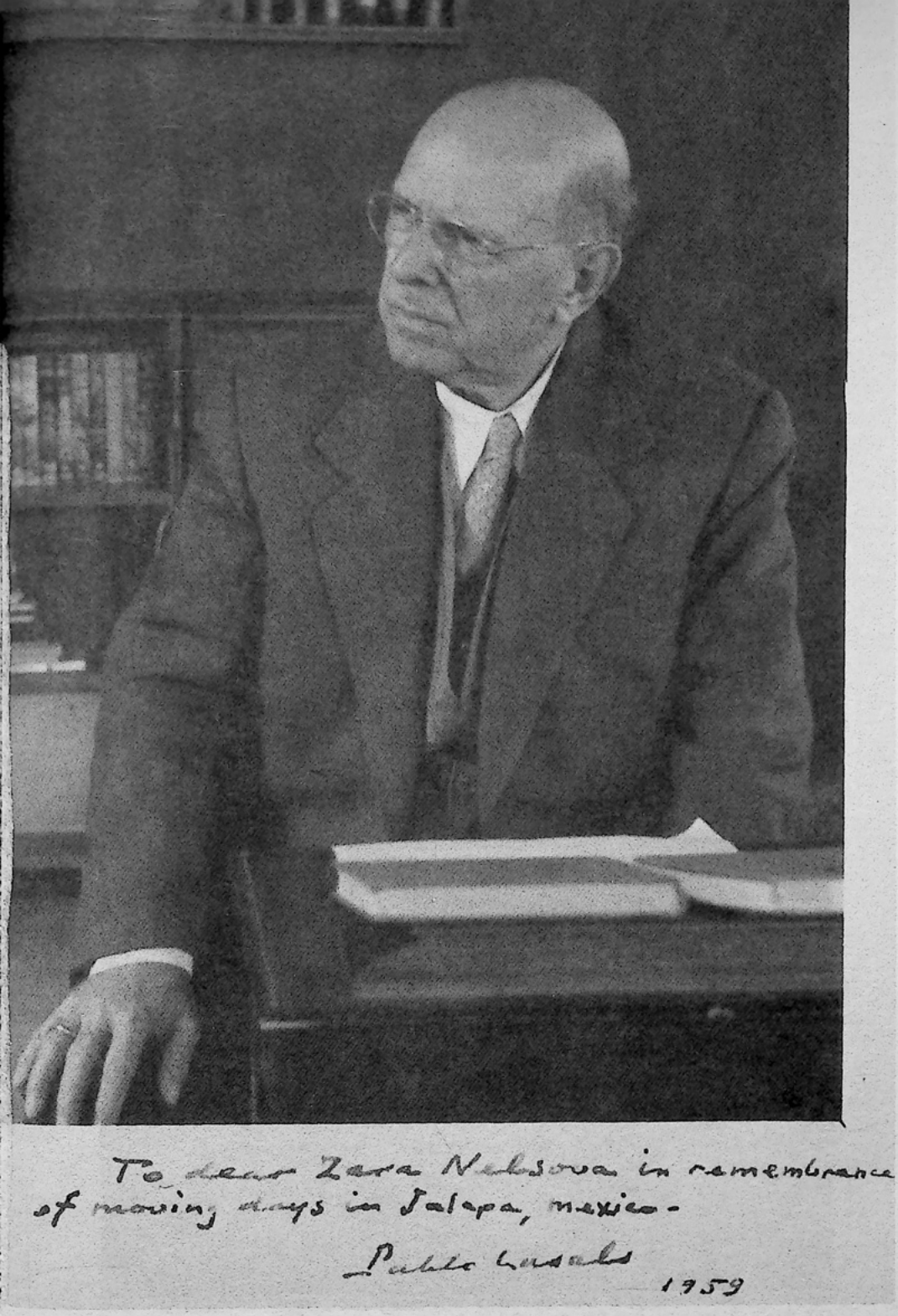
"Yes. Casals was only one of the three great masters with whom I studied during my 20's. I worked with Feuermann for a brief period shortly before his tragic premature death, and later I studied with Piatigorsky."

"It appears that you had an unusual number of teachers."

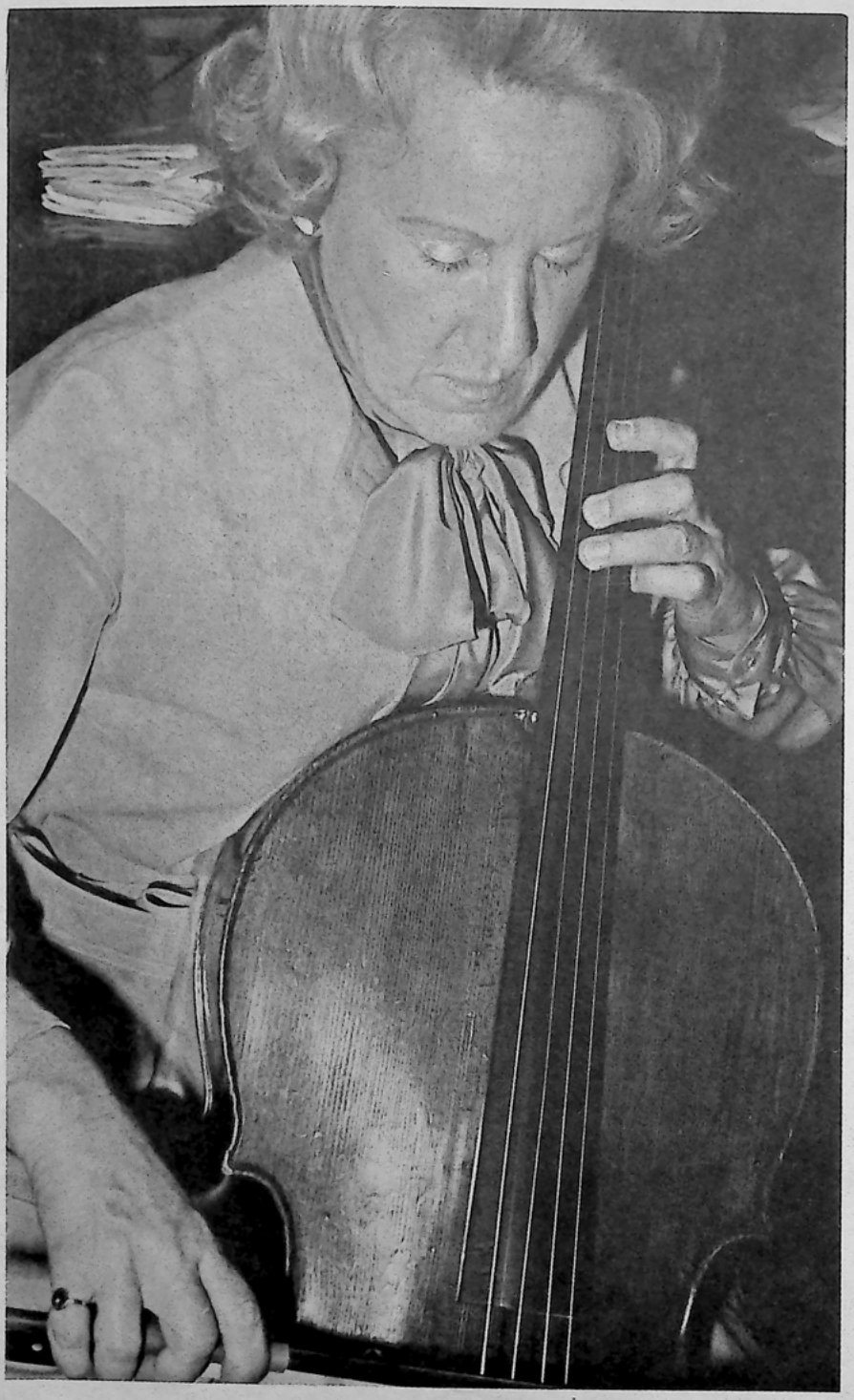
"True. I do not believe that it is necessary for a pupil to spend long years with any one teacher, provided that pupil is able to absorb the essence of that teacher's knowledge. Each pedagogue has his individual contribution to make to a gifted pupil. Of course, if the pupil is unable to absorb these teachings, it has all been mostly a waste of time."

"When did your career as a mature soloist begin?"

"After I made my New York recital debut in Town Hall, in 1942. My success in that concert catapulted me into the limelight."



"When I was a little girl I adored Casals."



"I loved Piatigorsky for his glorious sound!"

"Have you felt that you incurred any special difficulties in building a solo career because you are a woman?"

Nelsova hesitated for a moment. "No," she replied. "I realize this statement may appear a bit vain, but from the time I really began to play well, I felt I could hold my own with either male or female in any competition. A musician should have artistic humility, but never an inferiority complex if she or he chooses to compete as a soloist."

"Which of your cellist colleagues inspired you most?"

"When I was a little girl I adored Casals; he was like a God to me. Then I heard Piatigorsky and was smitten anew. It was not that Casals was relegated to second place in my heart, but the Piatigorsky effect was something different and electrifying. Then I heard Feuermann; again I acquired a divinity. I was fortunate enough to study with all three—not for long periods of time, but I learned much from each master. I loved Piatigorsky for his glorious sound; Casals for his lofty overall musical vision; and Feuermann, whom I consider to be the greatest cellist who ever lived, for his impeccable instrumental command, among other things. All three still inspire me."

"How do you feel about organized cello competitions?"

"Competitions can be both constructive and destructive. I myself entered only one in my life, when I was about seven. There were only two competitors, and I won. But seriously, the key to the matter, I believe, lies in the attitude of the player. If he enters with a feeling that his career will be ruined if he does not win, this can result in permanent damage to his future development, and he had better not enter. If he enters for the purpose of gaining experience, learning repertoire and meeting new colleagues, the results can be beneficial.

"I never entered a major competition and still acquired a career. The trouble with many young people is that they seek to develop a career in a hurry, and they become victimized by the commercial aspects of the problem. A healthy career takes time to develop, both for the artist and his potential audience. It is like baking a cake. One cannot merely turn up the oven temperature and expect the cake to bake faster.

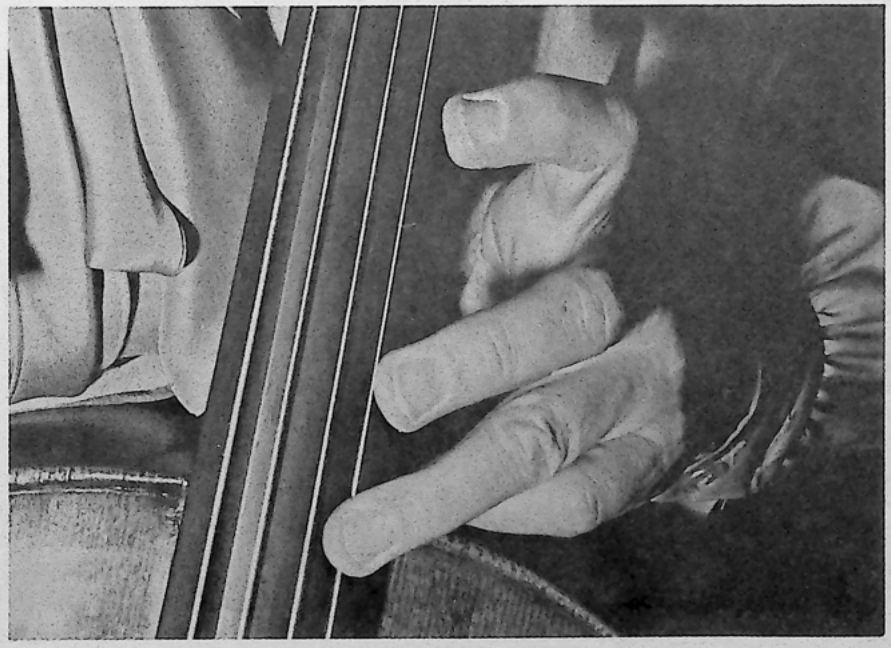
"Another thing, all talented players are not necessarily competition material, both for musical and psychological reasons. And

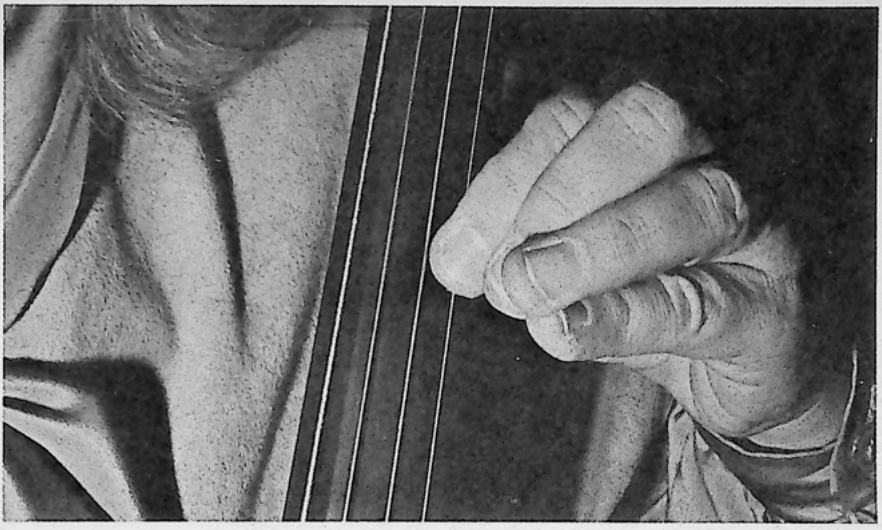
Nelsova in recital at Brigham Young University, Utah, 1971.

***Zara Nelsova and Sir William Walton rehearsing Sir William's* Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra.**

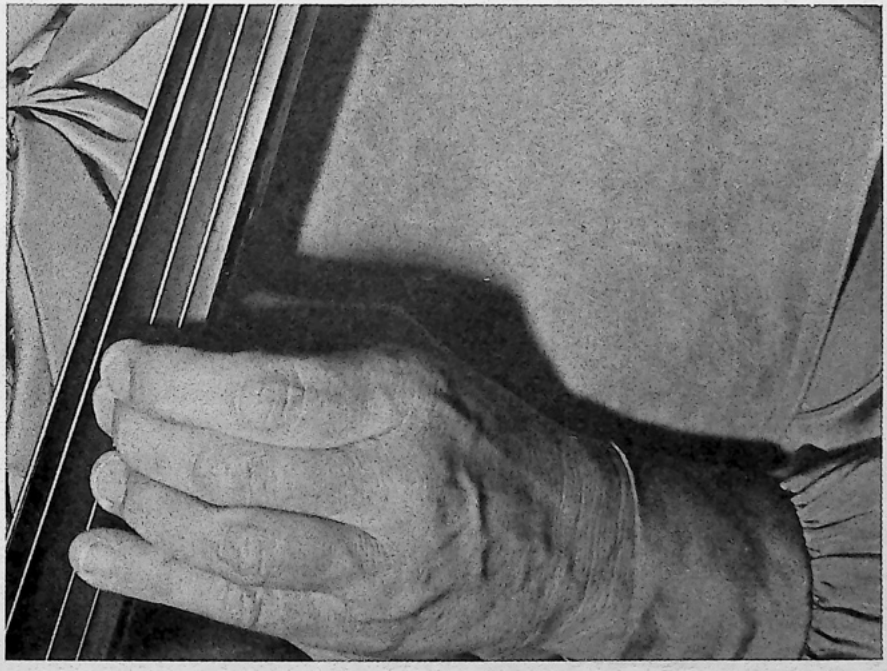
"All talented players are not necessarily competition material, both for musical and physchological reasons."

Nelsova's lush tone comes from a beautiful, wide vibrato. Note, on the facing page, how her fingers fall exactly over the string in such a way as to assure that the maximum surface of the "meat" is on the string thus allowing for a full vibrato effect when she vibrates.





Discussing her finger placement and the different types of vibrato she can effect, Nelsova (see facing page) demonstrates how she may use her second finger to add pressure to her first finger for a special vibrato effect. She also vibrates with more than one finger down on the same string.



Nelsova plays guitar too! During a rehearsal for a Gala Performance given by the Winnipeg Symphony in May, 1976, Nelsova plays the guitar part for a special* Symphony *written for the occasion. The other soloists were Jean Pierre Rampal playing the police whistle; Gary Graffman playing the recorder; Ruggiero Ricci playing the tuba; Jorge Bolet as the percussionist and Jeffrey Siegel playing double bass. What a cast!!

we must always remember, quite a number of competition winners have gained career impetus from their victories but in the long run were not successful."

"Have you ever been a judge in a competition?"

"Yes, but I try to avoid it whenever possible. It is not a task I enjoy. In 1958 I was on the jury in the Casals Competition. A number of contestants were very talented. The first two prizes went to two Czechs, who may have careers today in their own country, but not on the international scene. The other competition I remember best, among those in which I have been a jurist, was the Naumberg event when Nathanial Rosen was the winner. I felt very unhappy for the losers because there were so many exceptional talents among them with the potential for major solo or chamber music careers."

We knew that Nelsova had developed a passion for teaching and sought to learn some of her practice 'secrets'.

"I don't know whether the items I am going to tell you about can be classified as 'secrets', but you can take them for what they are worth.

"I have one exercise that I do as religiously as brushing my teeth every day, which I practiced with my father as he played his flute. It consists of drawing slow long bows as close to the bridge as possible without scratching. When I was five or six years old we made a game of it. I would try to progressively develop a 'longer' bow arm without altering the speed of the bow stroke; I would start at the frog pp, build to ff in the middle and then diminuendo to pp at the tip. Then I would reverse the procedure. Another thing I did, and this is seldom done—I would start slowly and gradually get even slower, keeping close to the bridge at the same place on the string. I guarantee that if this is done properly for two weeks, the pupil will recognize the improvement in his sound."

"How do you recommend that scales be practiced?"

"There are, of course, many ways to practice scales profitably. One of the ways I prefer most is to play a scale one note to the bow with full pressure, ff from end to end, without vibrato. No exercise should be played with vibrato! I believe that scales and exercises should be practiced with full tone. This greatly strengthens the bow arm. I like to select two scales and work on them eight and sixteen to a bow, and four-octave arpeggios, using 1-3-4 fingerings at

"I have one exercise which I do as religiously as brushing my teeth every day . . . it consists of drawing slow, long bows as close to the bridge as possible without scratching."

"I prefer to play a scale one note to the bow . . . without vibrato.

the top octave to give the fourth finger a good workout. Then, after I have finished every phase of scale practice, including chromatics, I select a scale and arpeggio and play them five times without stopping, at a good speed. It is amazing how this reveals a player's deficiencies—whether the intonation is pure, shortcomings in shifting, whether the thumb is strong enough to hold down two strings, problems of left and right hand co-ordination, all sorts of things."

"What about shifting positions?"

"I find that students tend to shift too slowly on the ascent and stumble when changing to the thumb position or while making the descent. I concentrate on eliminating this."

"Please give us some more of your ideas concerning fundamentals."

"Perhaps the most basic fundamental is the holding of the cello itself. It must never be held so tightly that the player is induced to over-tenseness. Although the hands of each player differ in size, bone structure, distribution of flesh, and the length and strength of the fingers, the holding of the cello is standard, except for the adjustment of the end pin, which must conform to the height of the cellist."

"Can you be more specific?"

Nelsova seized her cello, which was close at hand, and demonstrated. "You see—a cellist should sit at his instrument as if he were astride a horse, except, naturally, the horse would be gripped more tightly with the knees. The cello must be held firmly enough so that it does not slip when the player goes into the high positions. I grip much more tightly with my knees when playing octaves or other double-stops and relax the pressure for rapid finger passage-work."

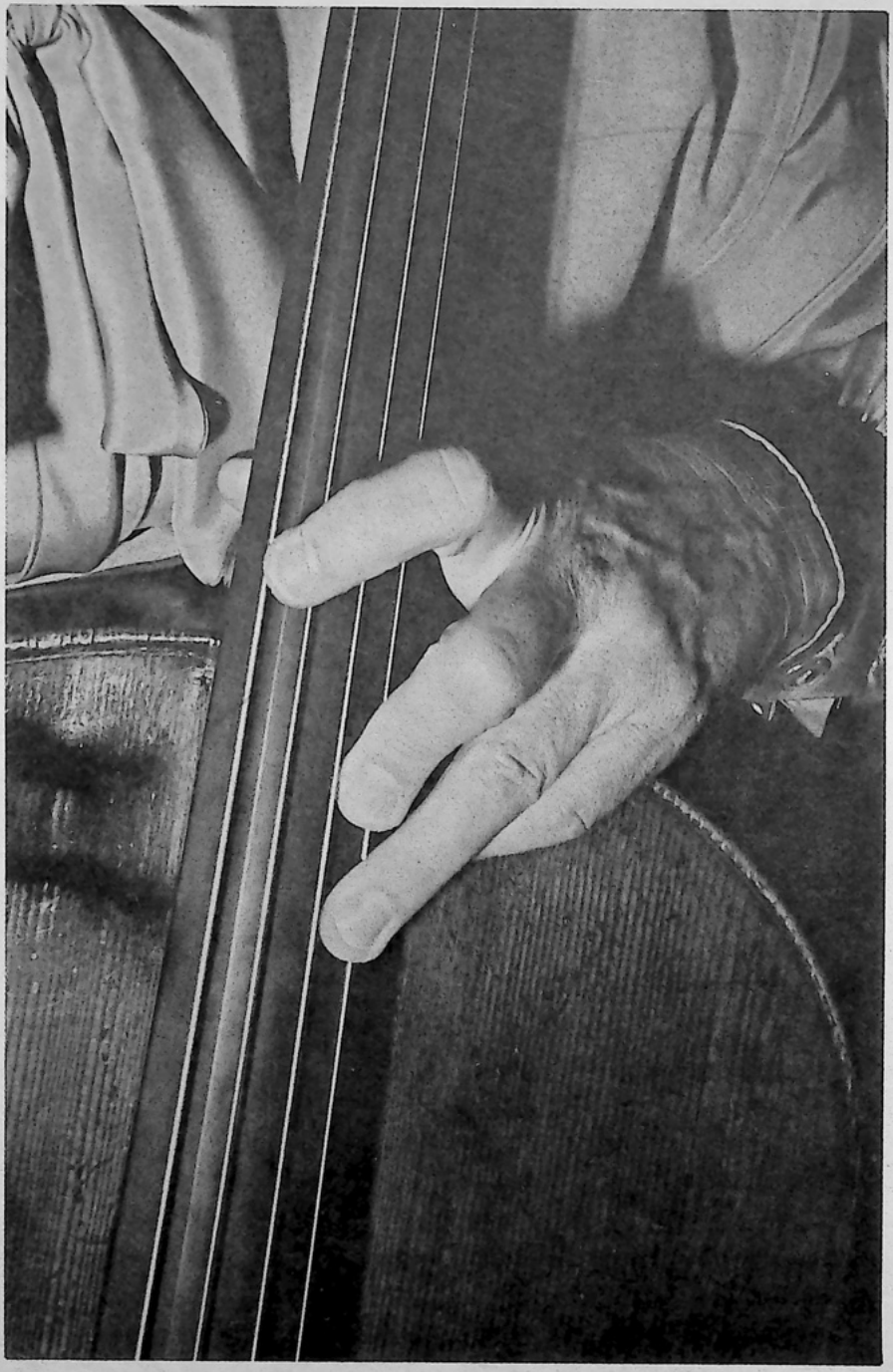
"What are your thoughts on string crossing and bow changes?"

"In both cases, the trick is to maintain the bow pressure. Many students make the error of diminishing bow pressure. And of course, in string crossings and changes, the bow arm must automatically change levels or unwanted accents are produced. Constant alertness to string changes is vital. An excellent exercise for developing smoothness in changing strings is to start slowly on the open C-string, and midway down the bow, change to the G-string. This shows the pupil both visually and physically the ex-

"An excellent exercise for developing smoothness in changing strings is to start slowly on the open C string, and midway down the bow change to the G string. This shows the pupil both visually and physically the exact distance he must negotiate.

" . . . in string crossings and changes, the bow arm must automatically change levels or unwanted accents are produced."

Demonstrating the proper cello posture for Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod, Nelsova exlcaimed, "You see—a cellist should sit at his instrument as if he were astride a horse."



" . . . fingerings should be as comfortable as possible, but musicality should take preference over technical convenience."

act distance he must negotiate for a smooth change. Upbow changes from the A-string to the C-string can be especially awkward."

"Do you have some advice for students about the selection of fingerings?"

"The most important function of fingerings is that they must express the musical content. I do not believe that fingerings should be set until the music is fully understood and the player is well along the way to establishing his interpretation of the work. Naturally, fingerings should be as comfortable as possible, but musicality should take precedence over technical convenience. But in no case should the handling of a passage be awkward. When a student is encountering difficulty in playing a technical passage, he should stop practicing it over and and over again and analyze the problem. Such practice time and energy are merely wasted. The passage must be analyzed both in conformity with the musical line and the physical propensities of the student. With proper analysis,

Nelsova with the co-author, Dr. Samuel Applebaum, discussing her edition of the Dvorak Cello Concerto.

any passage can be rendered reasonably comfortable. However, the student's ability to accomplish this is in direct ratio to the soundness of his basic technical training. Problems of bowing require the same approach as those of fingering."

"Can you give us some hints on vibrato?"

"Yes. Let me point out what I feel is one of the main deficiencies in vibrato production. Many cellists tend to vibrate on one finger at a time. This mitigates both strength and security, and, I might add, the ability to diversify tonal color. I recommend that one, or at times, more than one finger, be in contact with the vibrating finger—not on top of it, but against it. This also greatly increases the ability to control the sound. And one must learn to vibrate with any finger in any position, and in all types of stretches and extensions. Otherwise, the player's ability to express lyric, or, for that matter, technical passages, will be severely curtailed."

"We are always impressed by your self-assurance when we attend your concerts."

"That is probably because psychologically I have complete confidence in what I am doing. Again, at the risk of being repetitious, this stems from the soundness of my fundamental training with my father. If only all teachers could be so certain that they were passing on to their students the best possible advice, how many countless technical heartaches would be avoided!"

"As a student did you have special difficulty with any particular phase of technique?"

"No. I always spent a great amount of time practicing slowly and carefully, listening intently to every note I played."

"Do you look at the fingerboard when making a long position leap?"

"Never. I know my fingerboard so well I don't have to."

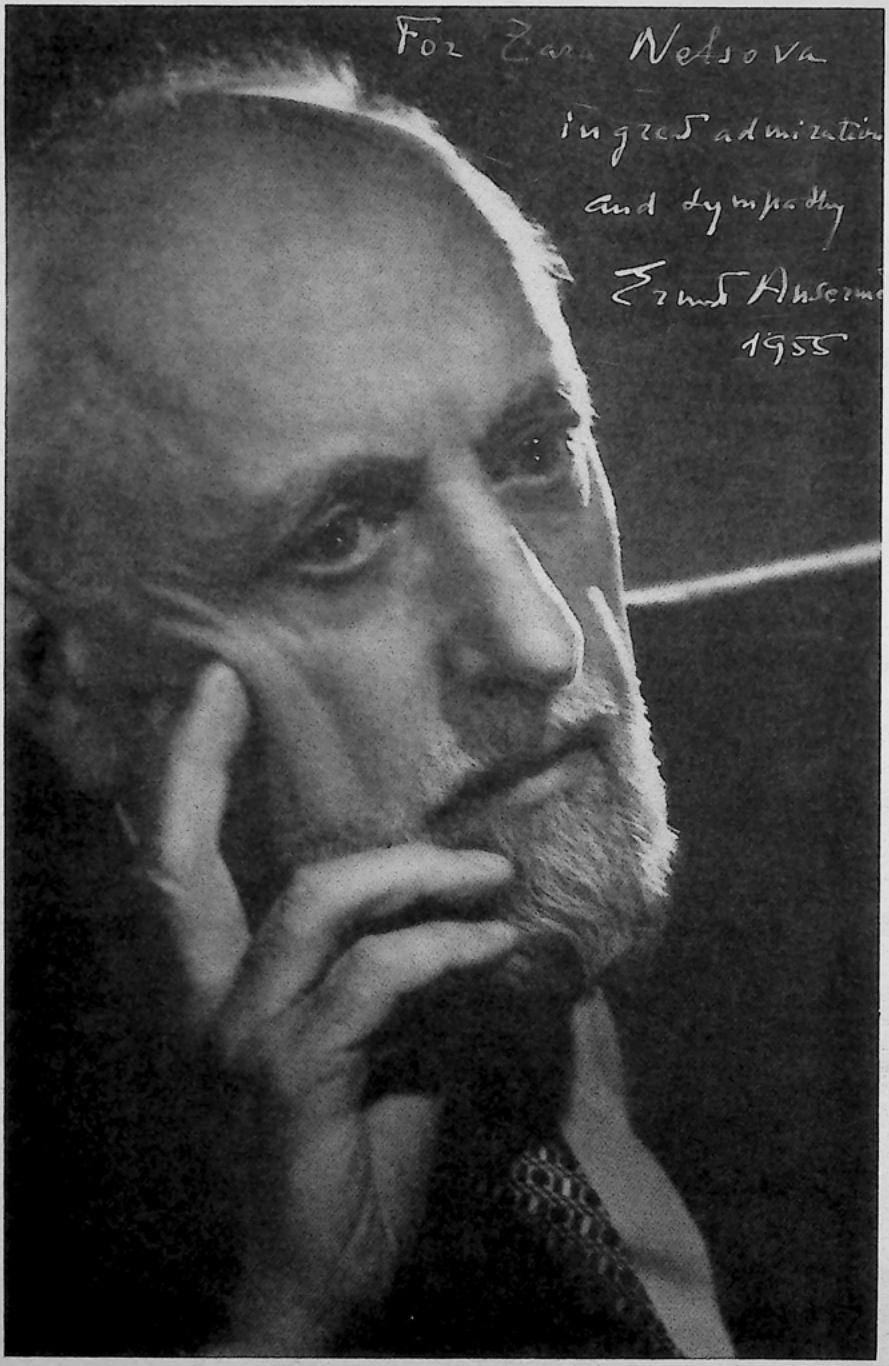
"Do you practice on the day of a concert?"

"I will practice only about 20 minutes at 5:30 P.M. when I am scheduled for an evening recital. But often when I play with orchestra, I have a rehearsal the day of the concert."

"Do you practice and play on your Strad all the time without changing instruments?"

"Yes. It is my belief that a fine instrument never gets tired if treated properly. My Lamy bow is the same stick that I have used since I was 12. I've tried others, but always come back to my Lamy."

"I recommend that one, or at times, more than one finger, be in contact with the vibrating finger—not on top of it, but against it."



Ernest Ansermet was one of Nelsova's close friends.

"How often do you rehair your bow?"

"When I am working hard on tour, I have it rehaired every 10 days to two weeks. I prefer unbleached hair. It seems to be stronger and has a better bite."

"How do you feel about students using the printed fingerings in editions that are prepared by leading artists?"

"The player should never accept these fingerings or bowings as the holy gospel, not even my own. Very often these fingerings are helpful and timesaving, and help to stimulate the learner's intellectual processes. But let me give you a small example of my own thinking in this area. I remember when I was studying the Schumann Concerto. In the printed edition, at the end of the first page just before the first tutti, the final four notes of the two scales are marked 1-2-3 and a harmonic 3. As a result, most cellists tend to 'swallow' these four climactic notes. I changed this to 1-2-4 and then a solid 3. This makes the ending much more secure and strong. In general, I admit that many of the fingerings I use require explanations for students."

"Do you still study new repertoire?"

"I am so busy with my career, I have all I can do to get through the repertoire I already know. But I do add to it whenever possible. I wish I could do more. One of the newer works I perform is the Concerto by the Britisher, Hugh Wood, and I am performing a new Duo for Cello and Piano by Henri Lazarov this season in my recital at Alice Tully Hall in New York."

Traveling occupies a sizeable portion of Nelsova's time, and she is quite an entourage unto herself. Her Strad, which accompanies her everywhere, is strapped into an individual seat on plane flights and charged half fare in the United States, full fare everywhere else. Also accompanying her are the enormous-skirted gowns for which she is famous, packed in individual plastic bags and layered into a specially constructed oversized suitcase. And since she is somewhat of a health food faddist, she carries along an orange squeezer, a hot pot, a supply of whole grain cereal and powdered soy bean milk. She emphasizes that she has two prime interests in life—people and music. Among her numerous recordings are Bloch's "Schelomo," recorded with Ansermet and Abravanel, the Dvorak Concerto with Krips, and Beethoven's complete Cello-Piano Sonatas and Variations with Arthur Balsam.

We asked Nelsova to recount some humorous anecdotes of her long career. Eyes twinkling, she complied.

"Once, I think it was during a recital at the college in Oberlin, I broke a string. I apologized to the audience, saying that my G-string had broken. Everyone burst out into gales of laughter. I wondered why. A colleague later said 'did you have to be so honest?' Then it first became clear to me that a G-string does not necessarily have to be related to a musical instrument. Luckily, I have a good sense of humor," she chuckled.

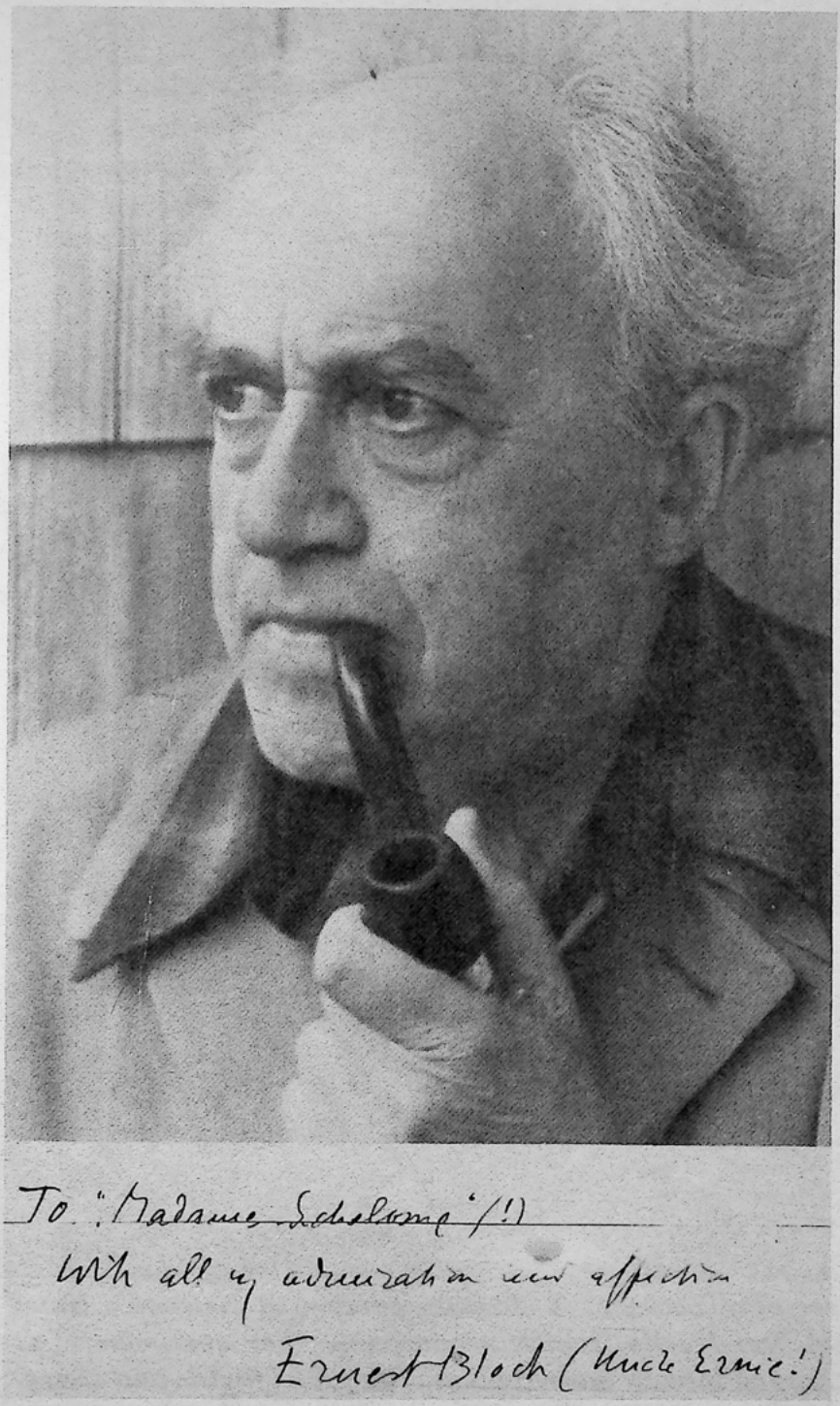
"We joined in the mirth, as co-author Henry Roth recalled a similar incident when announcing to an all-boy high school assembly that he was going to play "Air on the G-String" by Bach as a violin solo.

Nelsova continued. "Even more embarrassing than that was the time I was playing the Elgar Concerto at a festival on a very hot day. I always wear a double strand of pearls but due to the excessive heat, I had taken them off when warming up in my dressing room. I hurriedly put them back on just before going onstage.

"I started to play and matters were going along smoothly until I felt something give way behind my neck. I realized what had happened. The clasp had opened! Ever so slowly the pearls were beginning to slide down the front of my dress. What was I to do? At a point in the Scherzo section of the first movement, the pearls suddenly descended into my bosom. I kept on playing, but the pearls, curled into a bulky lump, were actually getting into the way of the cello. Should I stop? Which was more important, the discomfort or the performance?

"I managed to get through the movement. Then, during the pause, I smiled sweetly at the audience, reached down deep into my bodice, dug them out and handed them to the concertmaster. He gallantly put them into his pocket without so much as cracking a smile, and picked up his violin to proceed with the next movement. But the audience, not to be denied its part in the spectacle, dissolved into hysterics. I suppose I could call it a success of a sort, but I don't recommend the experience to any of my lady colleagues."

Nelsova had agreed to provide us with a personal copy of the music of a major work. She selected the Dvorak Cello Concerto, an opus of sublime nobility and searing emotionalism. Nelsova again



Ernest Bloch's glowing tribute to Nelsova.

Traveling occupies a sizeable portion of Nelsova's time. Her Strad cello, which accompanies her everywhere, is strapped into an individual seat on plane flights and charged half fare in the United States, full fare elsewhere.

took up her cello and demonstrated long segments of the work, intermittently stopping and explaining the thinking behind her bowing and fingering selections, and pointing out intimate details of her bow and finger applications. These, of course, are infinitely better expressed by word of mouth and demonstration, rather than the written word. She used the Schirmer edition, edited by Willeke.

Even in the informal setting, Nelsova's playing was grandly impressive—sumptuous in sound, impeccable in technique, audacious in attack, crisply articulated and eloquent in emotional communication. She also sang many of the passages to illustrate phrasing.

"Remember," she said, "it is not mandatory that a student exactly emulate my bowings and fingers, but I have thought them out carefully over a lifetime of performance experience. If any of my fingerings seem a bit awkward at first, repeat the fingering slowly several times, and perhaps it will make better sense than standard fingerings that may seem 'easier' than mine, which I admit are quite individualistic.

"In a large-scale work with orchestral background, one must be careful not to underplay, dynamically, because even though a passage is marked 'piano', one must not take this too literally, lest a well-intentioned 'piano' by the solo cellist become lost in the orchestral fabric. Another thing, I never bow on the Dvorak chords from above the string. Rather, I first set the bow on string prior to the attack. You will note, too, that I have no compunction about playing phrases detached, even though the printed score indicates slurring. One must use one's own musical instinct about such matters, and if a change seems to help a player to better transmit the inherent message of work—so be it!"

Upon these cogent observations, we bade farewell to the notable cellist, confident that the interested student would receive illumination from the following Nelsova-edited text. Our visit had been a pleasurable experience. Nelsova, for all her innate dignity, is a real 'fun' lady!

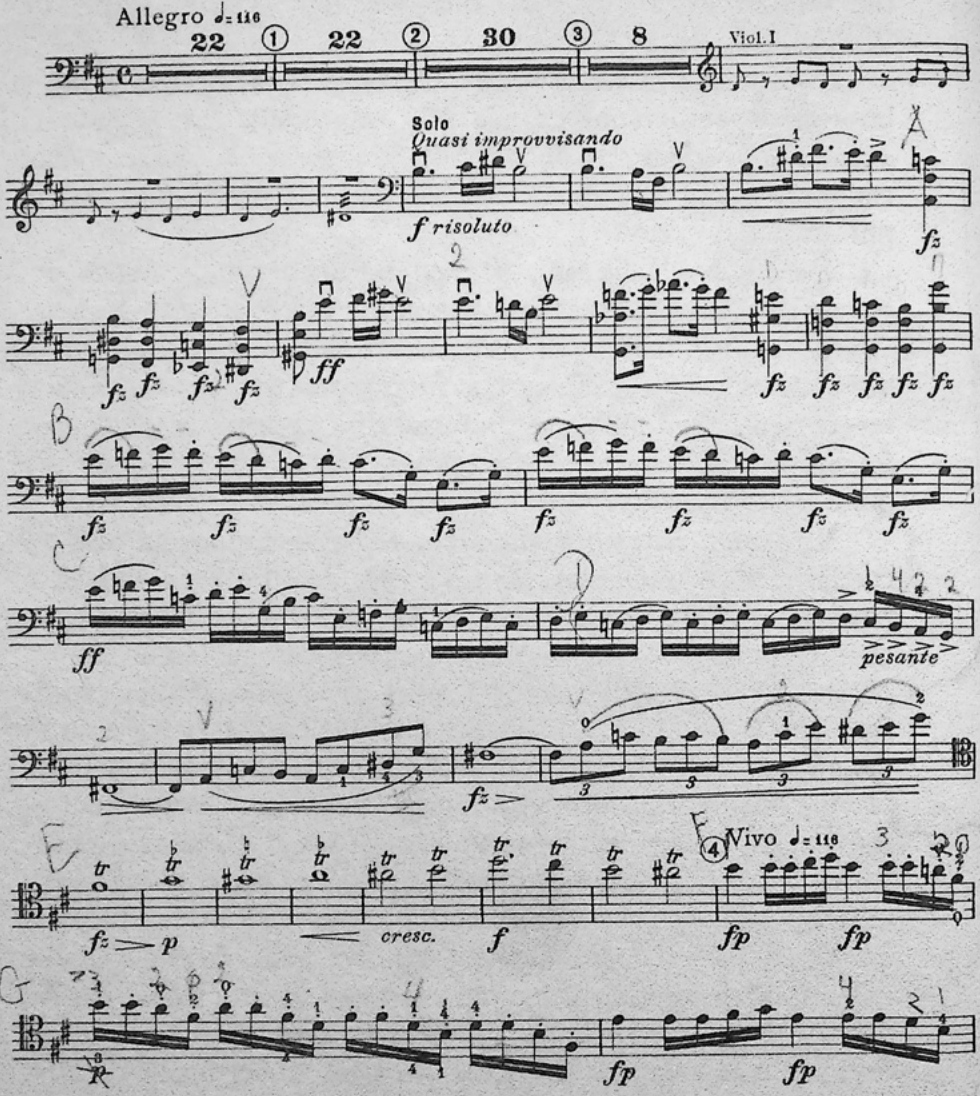
Dedicated to Hans Wihan

Concerto in B Minor

Violoncello

I

Edited and Fingered by
Willem Willeke

Antonin Dvořák. Op. 104

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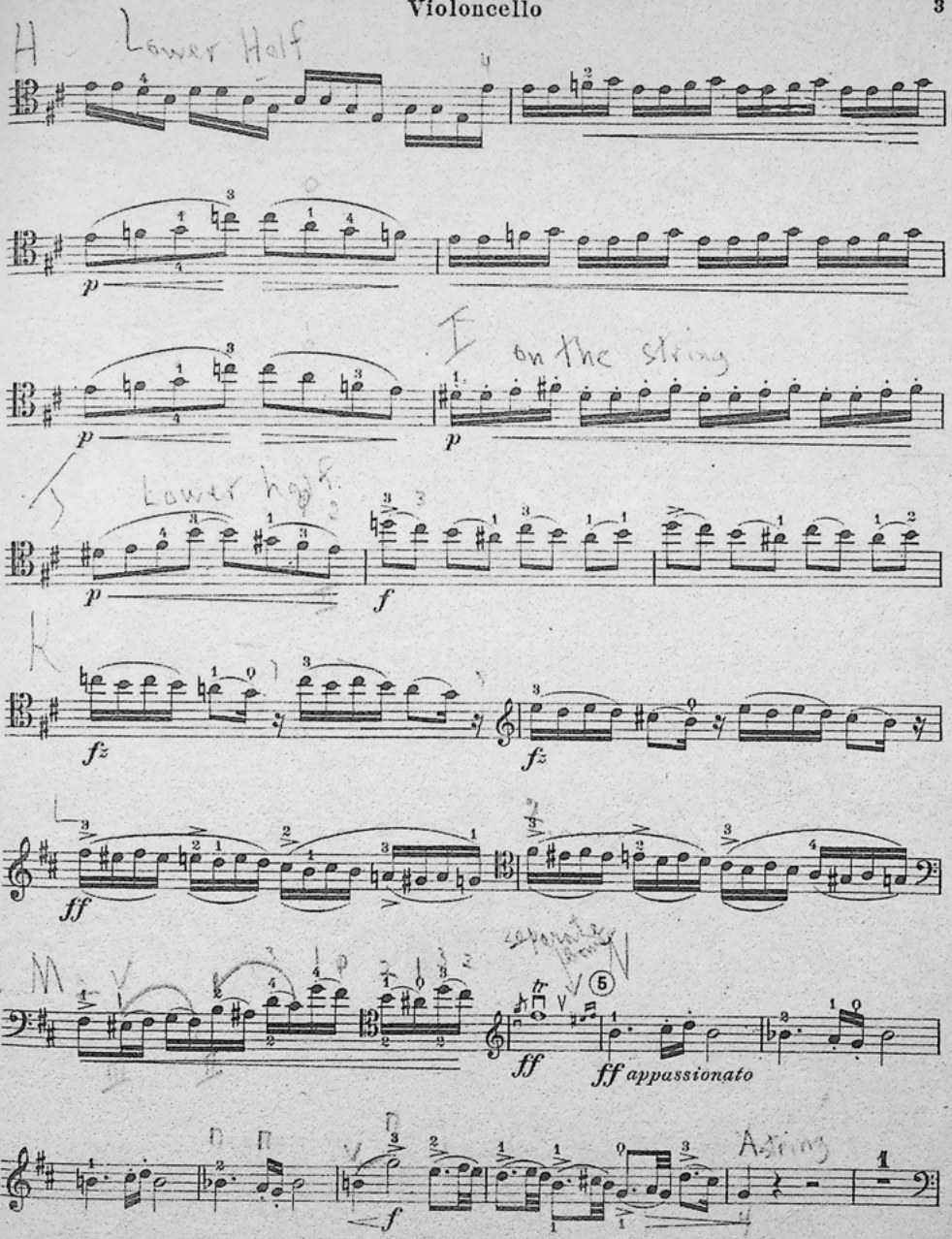
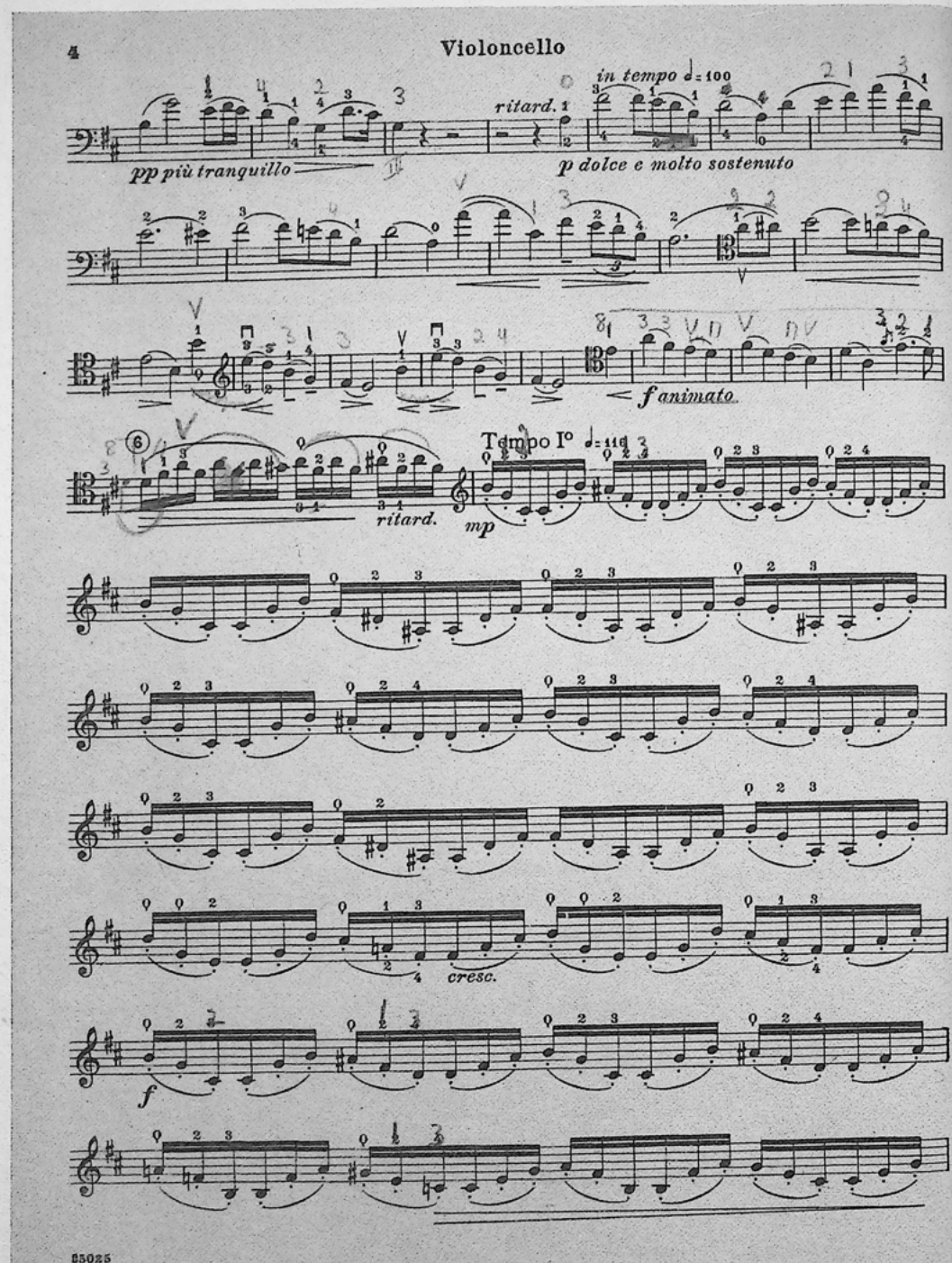
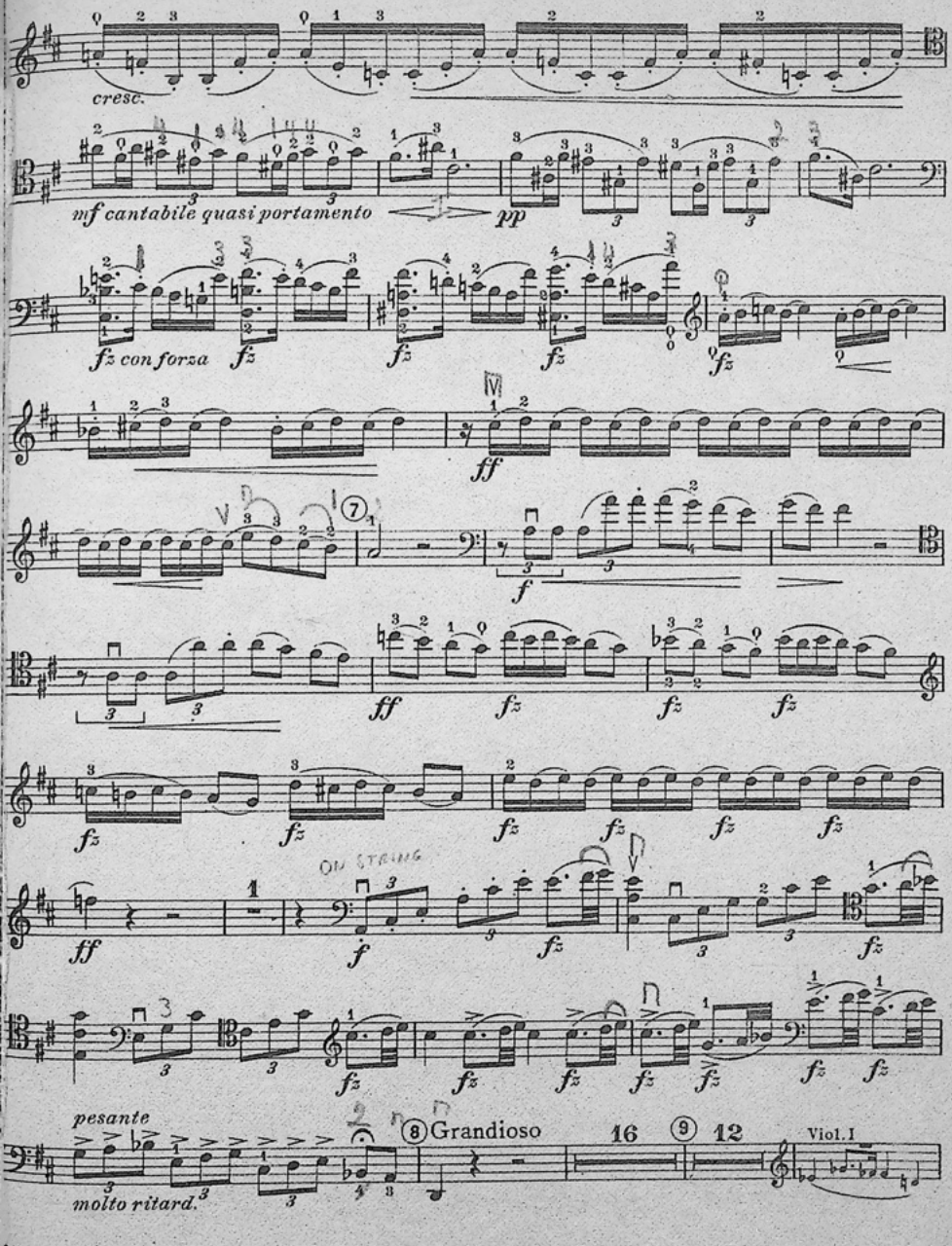
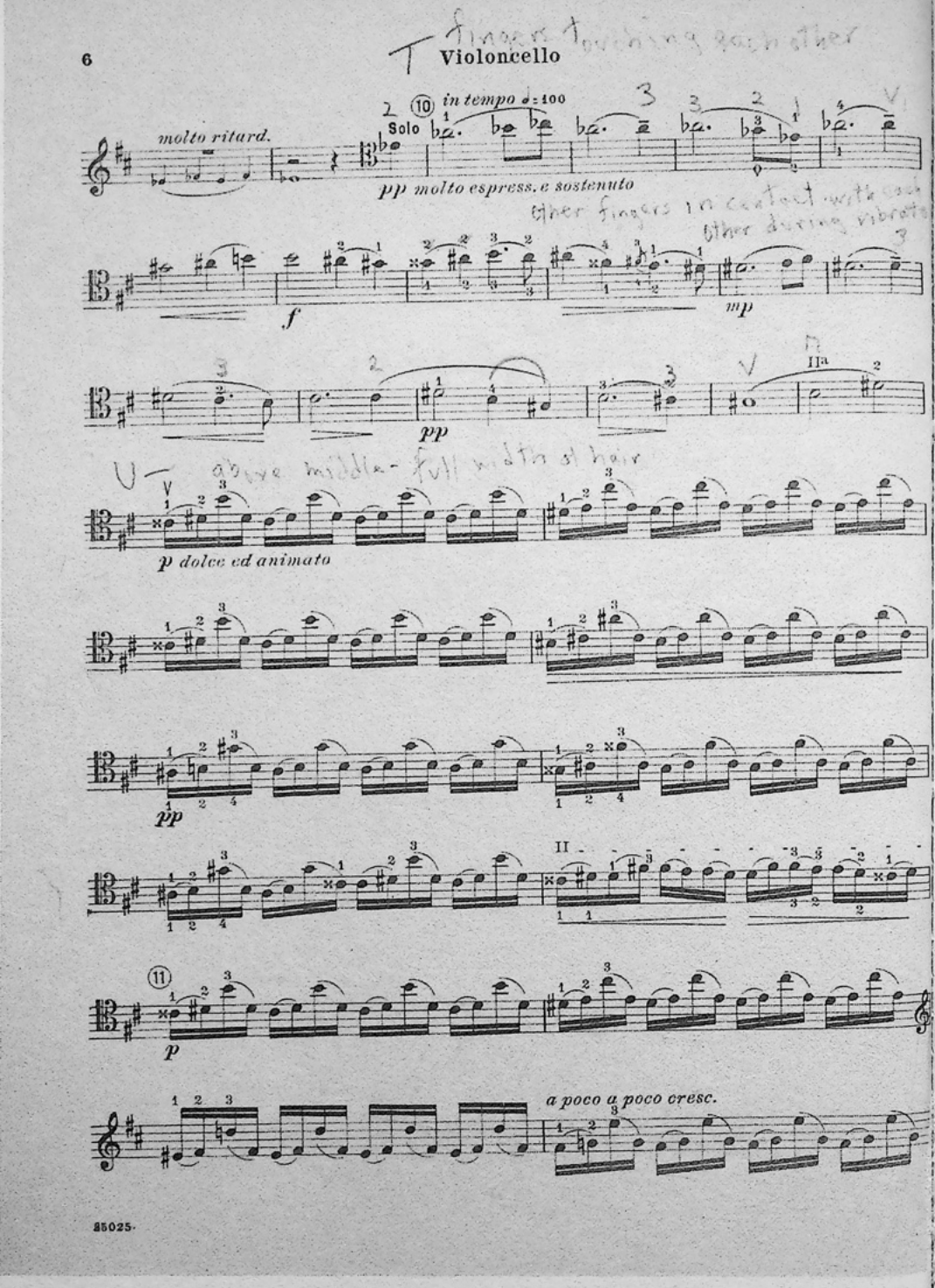
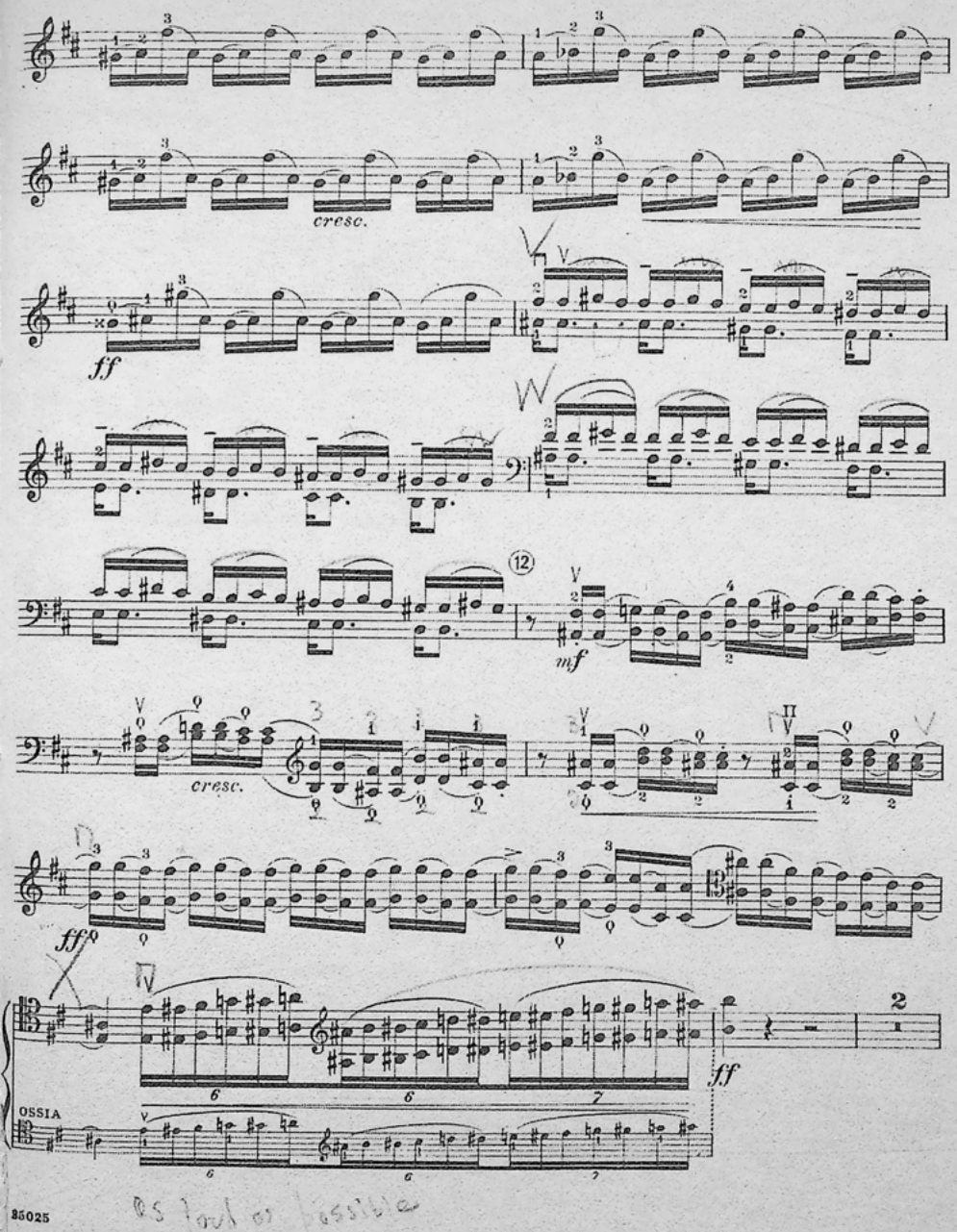
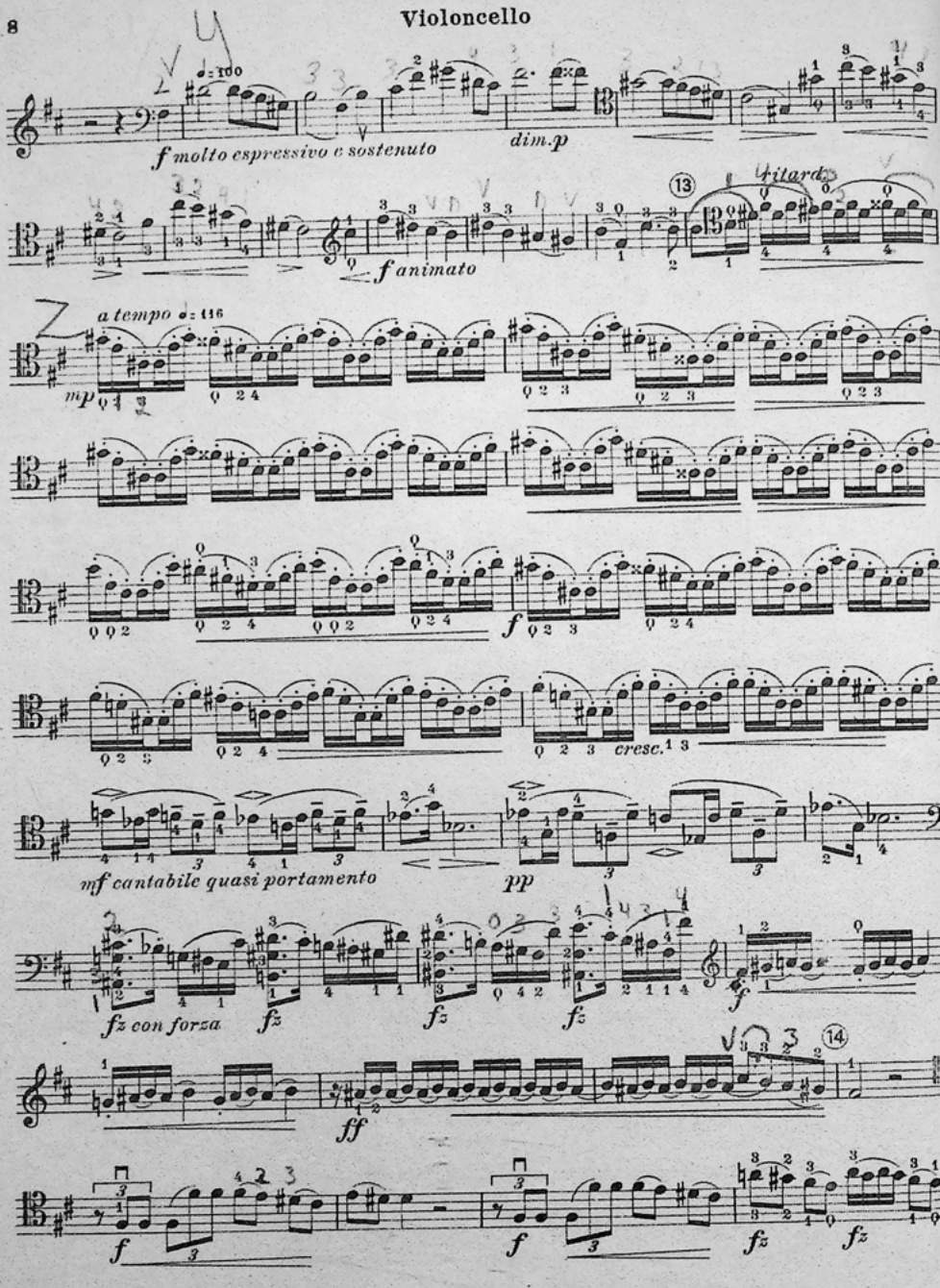

A
Lower Half
p
E
on the string
p
Lower half
p
f
fz
fz
ff
M
ff
ff appassionato
D
f
A string


Violoncello
pp più tranquillo
ritard.
in tempo ♩= 100
p dolce e molto sostenuto
f animato
Tempo I° ♩= 116
ritard.
mp
cresc.
f


cresc.
mf cantabile quasi portamento
pp
fz con forza
fz
ff
f
ON STRING
pesante
molto ritard.
8 Grandioso
16
9
12
Viol. I


Violoncello
molto ritard.
Solo
10
in tempo ♩= 100
pp molto espress. e sostenuto
f
mp
pp
p dolce ed animato
pp
II
11
p
a poco a poco cresc.
35025

cresc.
ff
12
mf
cresc.
fff
ff
OSSIA
2


♩= 100
f molto espressivo e sostenuto
dim.p
13
ritard.
f animato
a tempo ♩= 116
mp
f
cresc.
mf cantabile quasi portamento
pp
fz con forza
fz
fz
fz
fz
14
ff
f
f
fz
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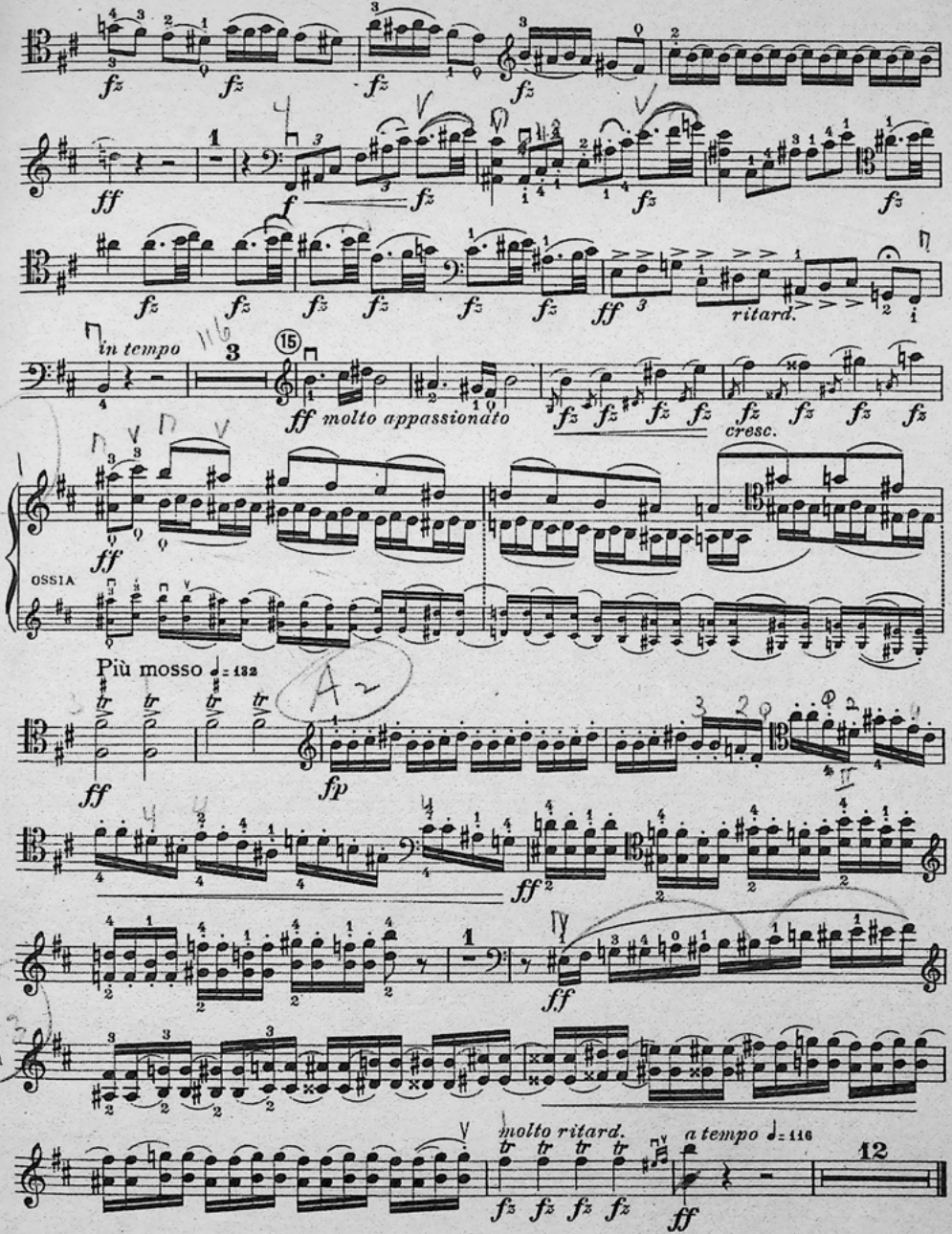
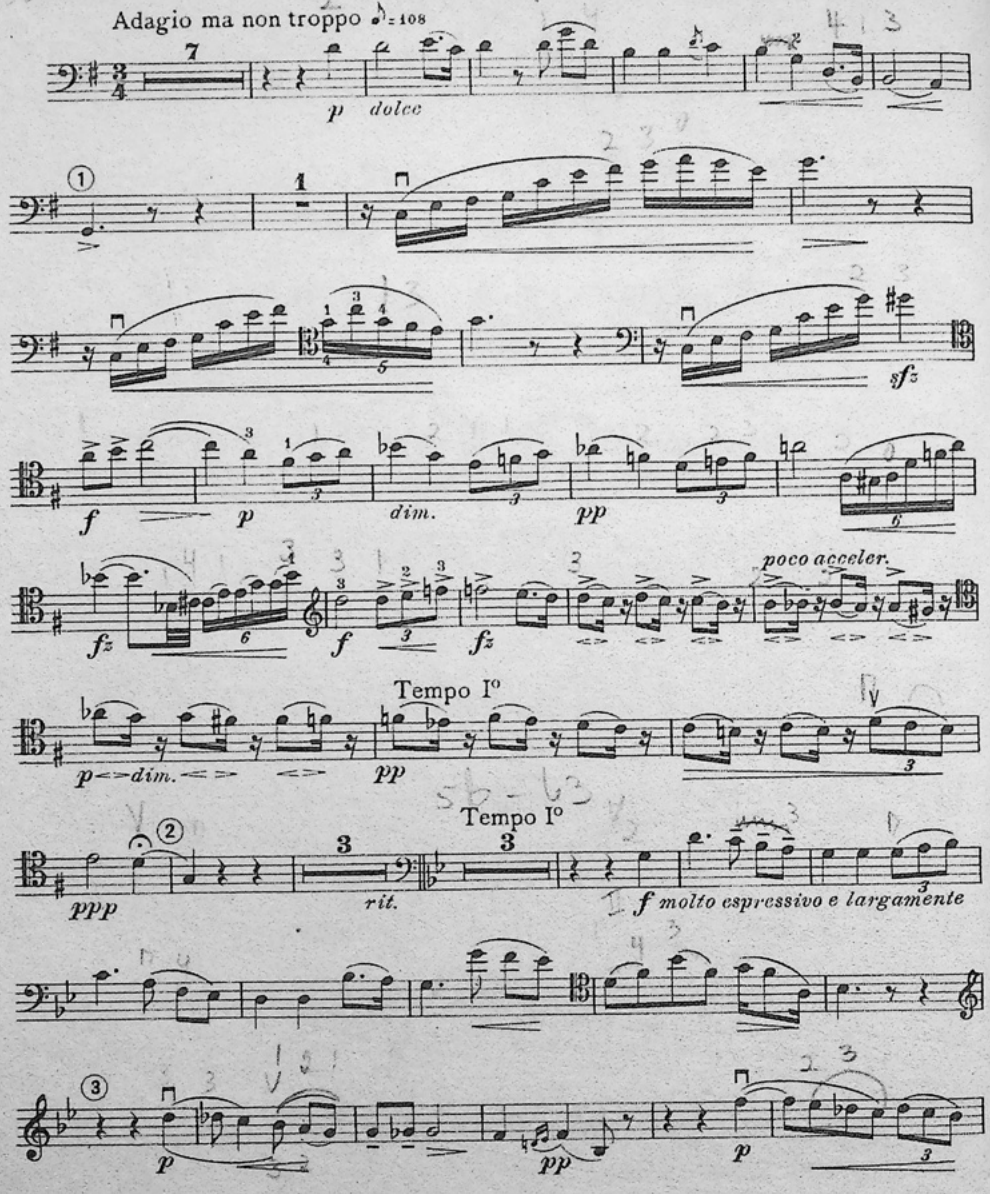
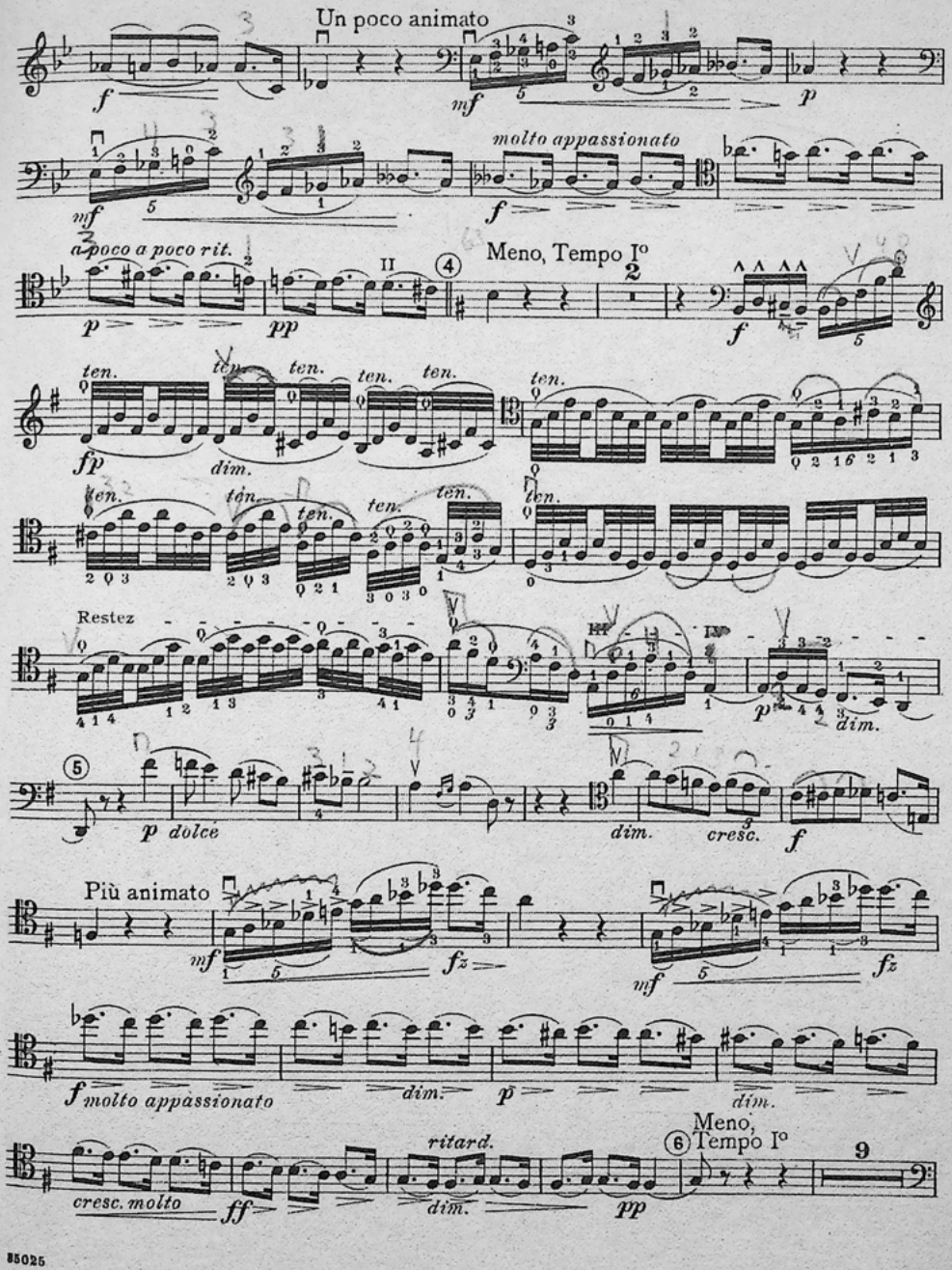
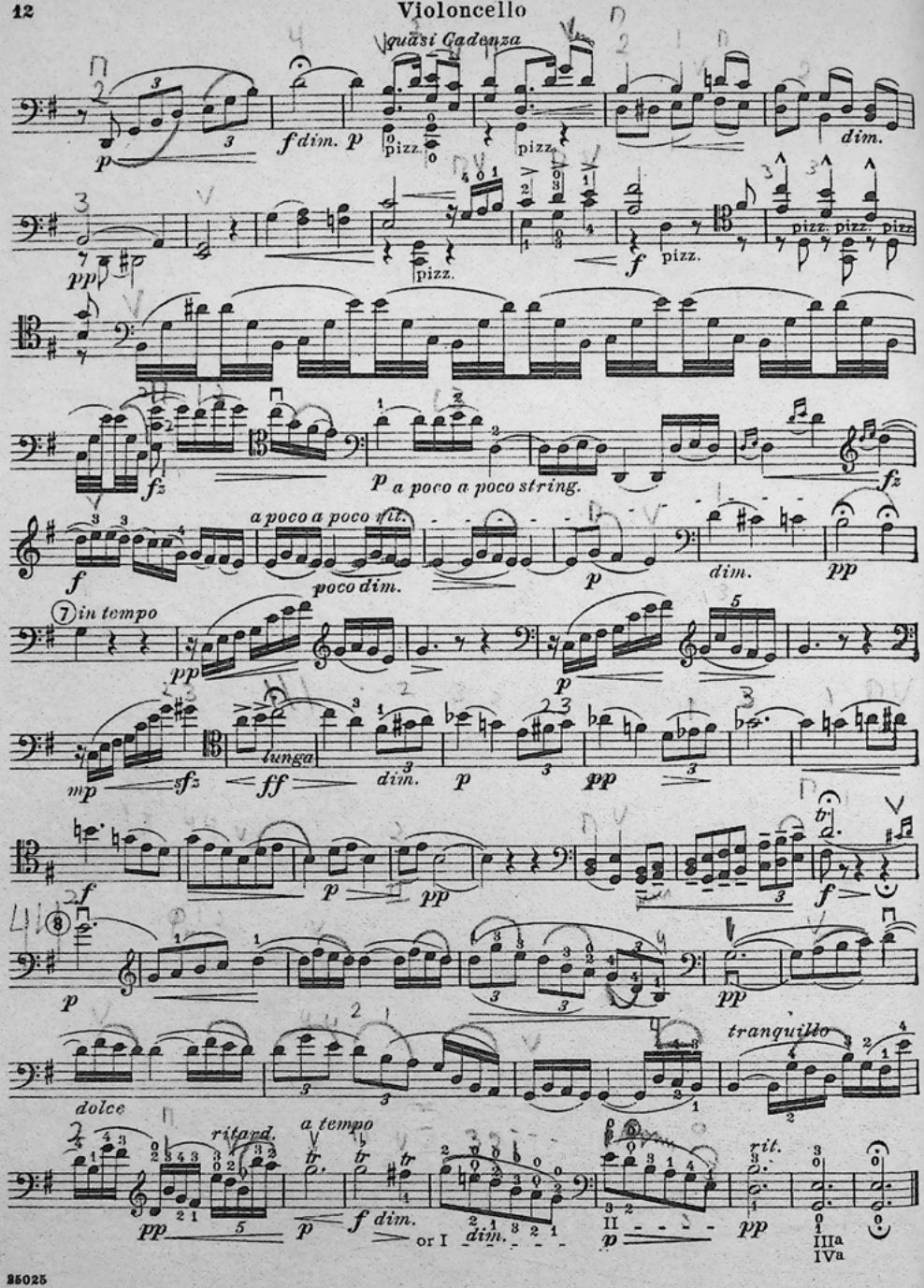
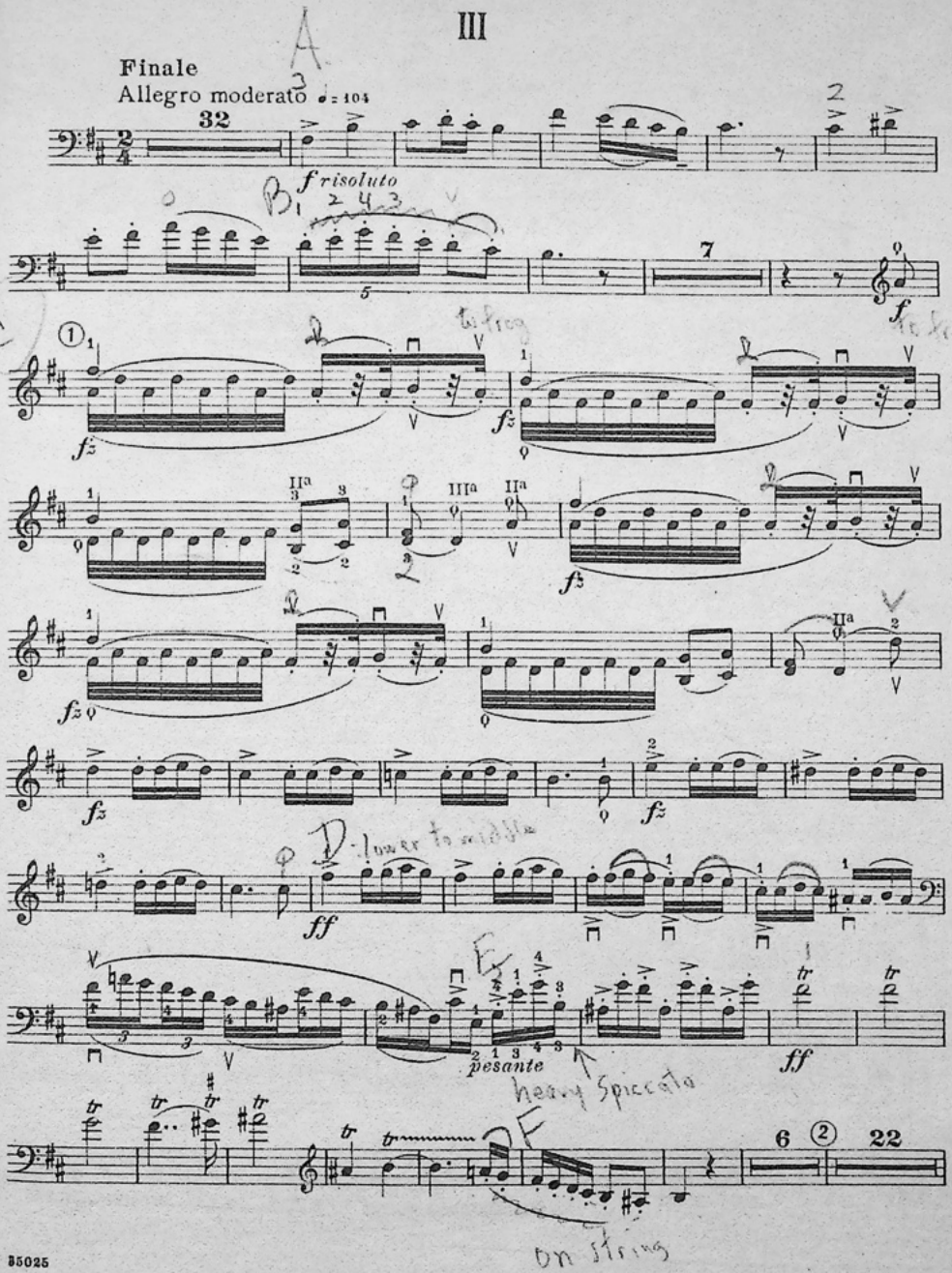
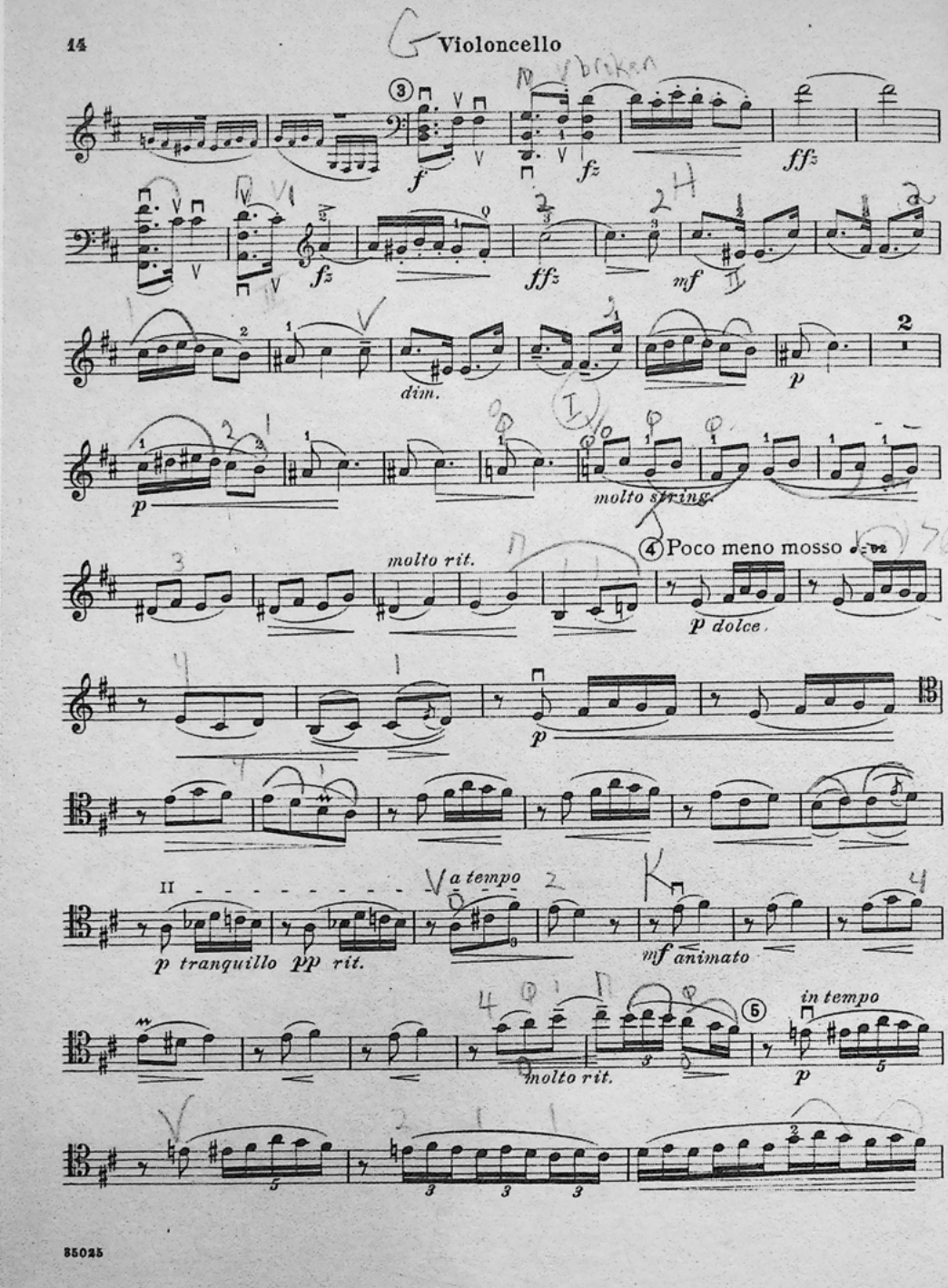
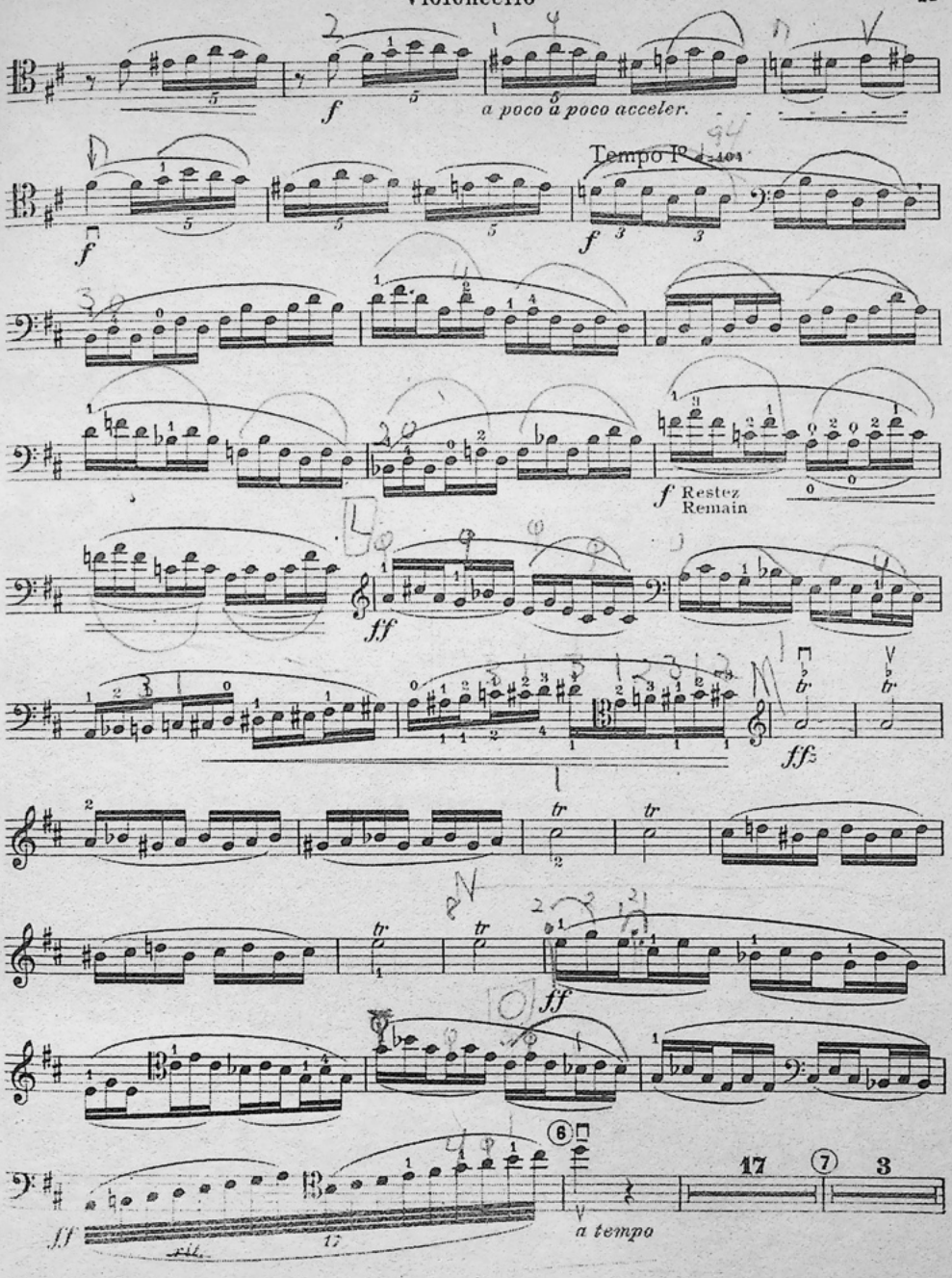
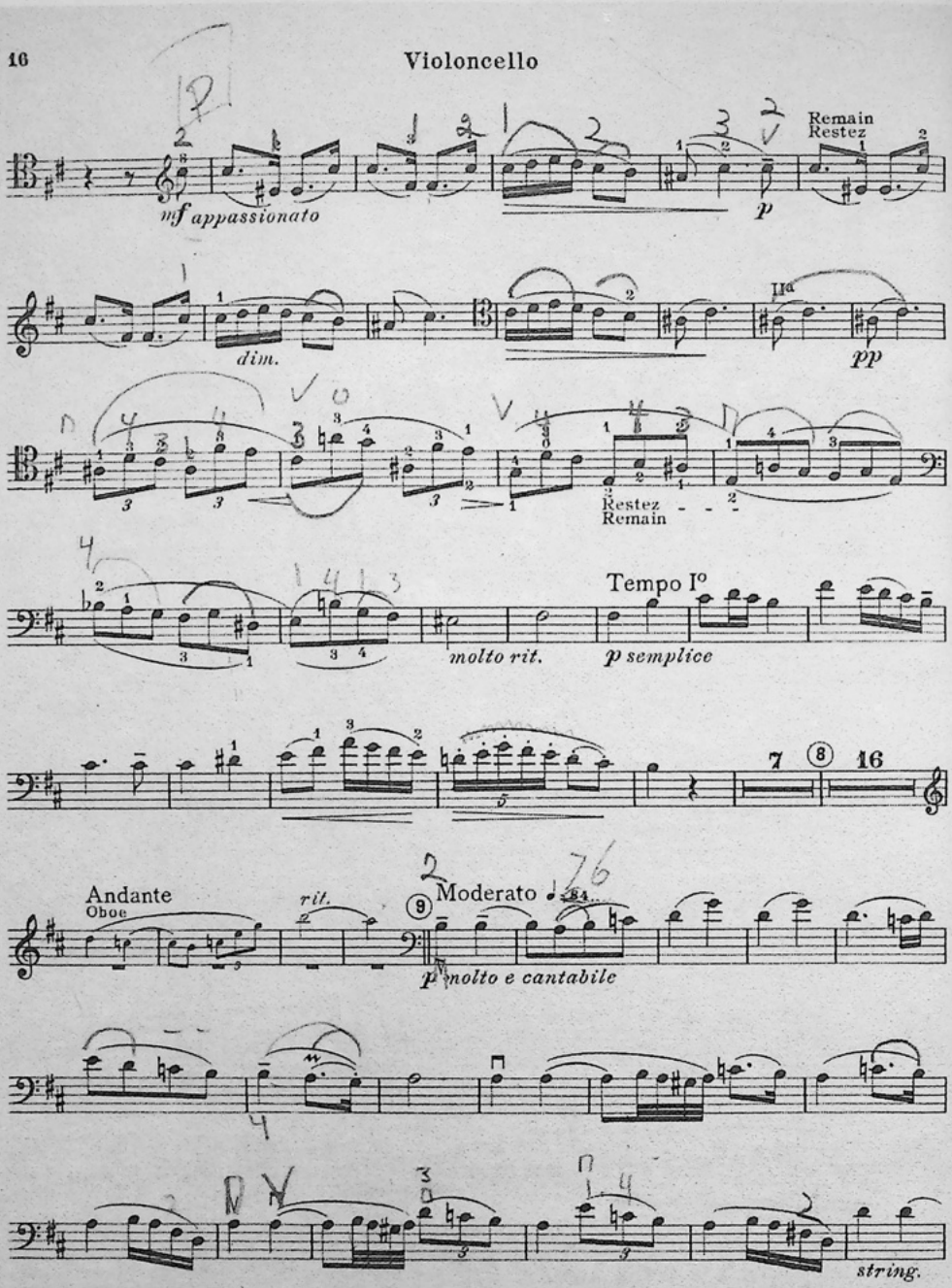
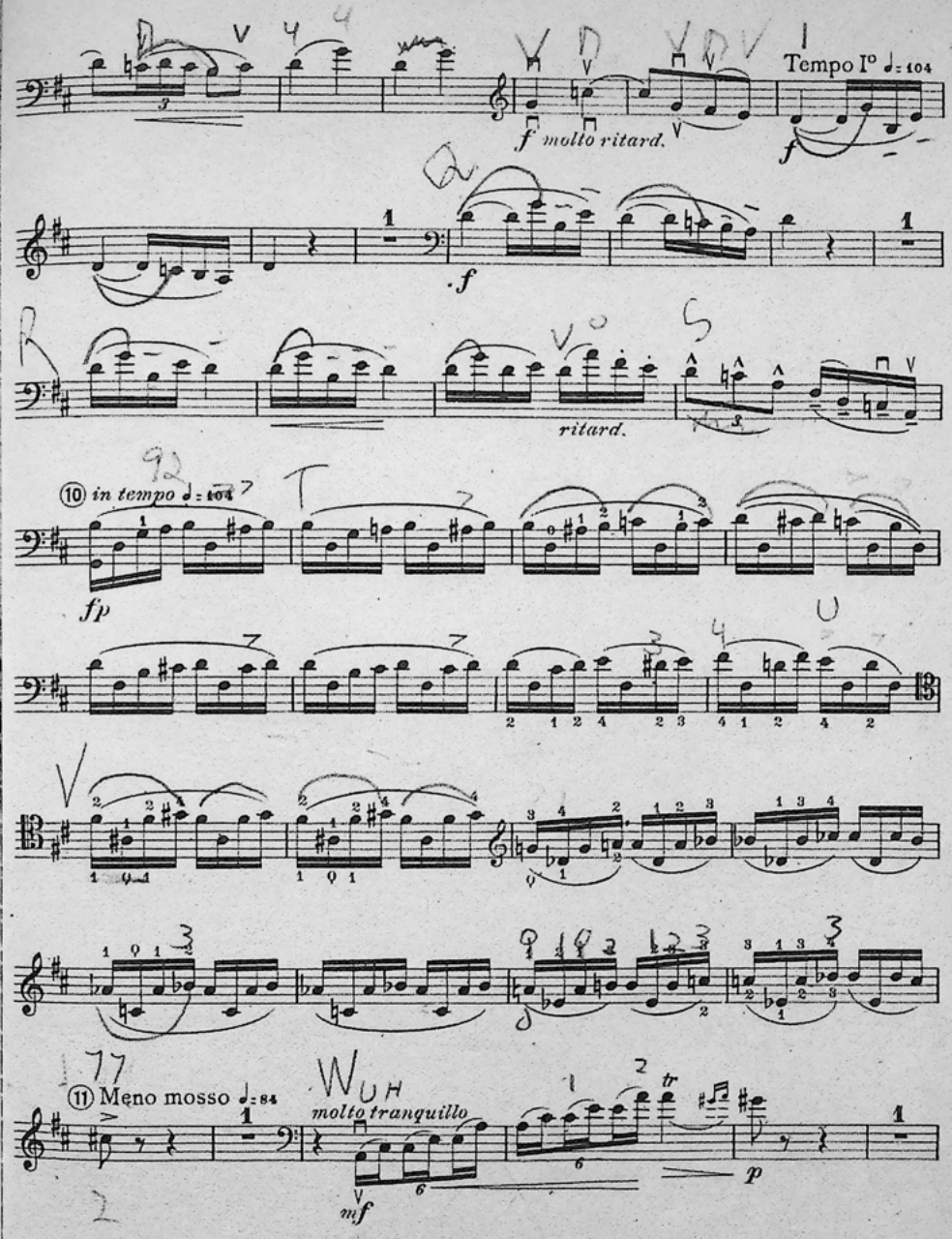

fz
ff
f
in tempo
ff molto appassionato
cresc.
ritard.
OSSIA
Più mosso ♩= 132
fp
molto ritard.
a tempo ♩= 116
12

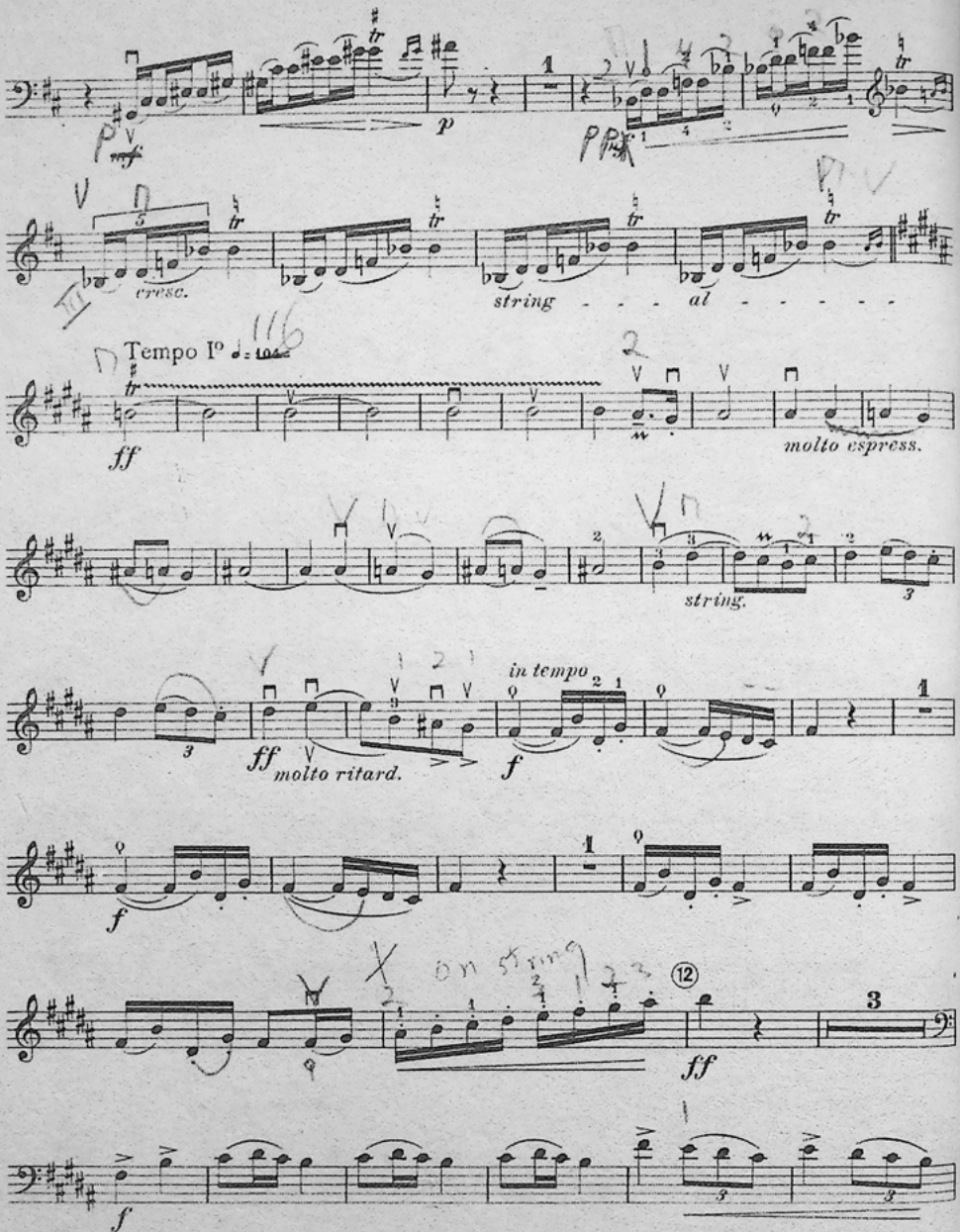
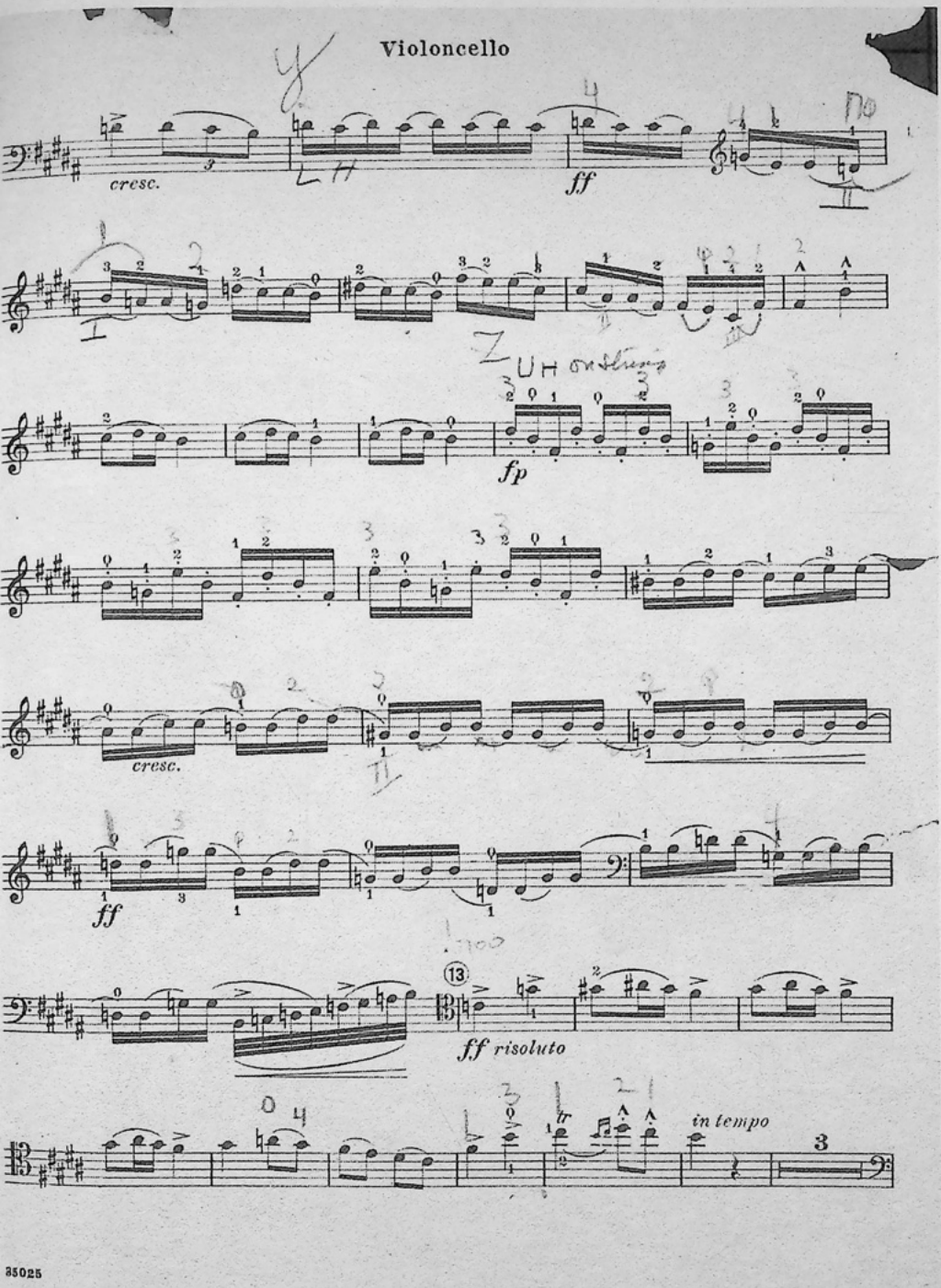
II

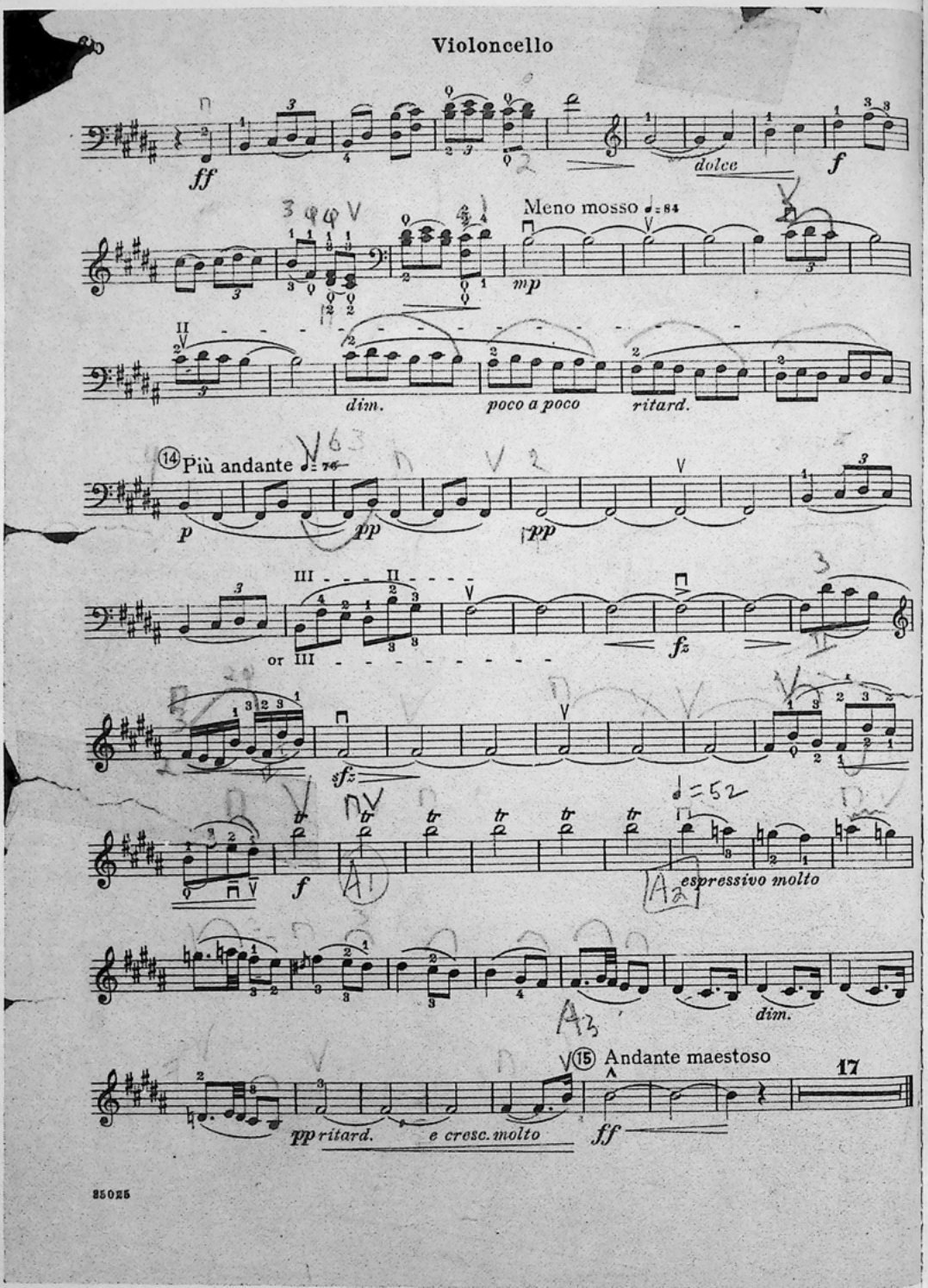

Adagio ma non troppo ♪ = 108
p dolce
dim.
pp
sfz
f
fz
poco acceler.
Tempo I°
p dim.
ppp
rit.
Tempo I°
f molto espressivo e largamente

85025

Un poco animato
molto appassionato
a poco a poco rit.
Meno, Tempo Io
ten.
dim.
Restez
dolce
cresc.
Più animato
molto appassionato
ritard.
Meno,
Tempo Io

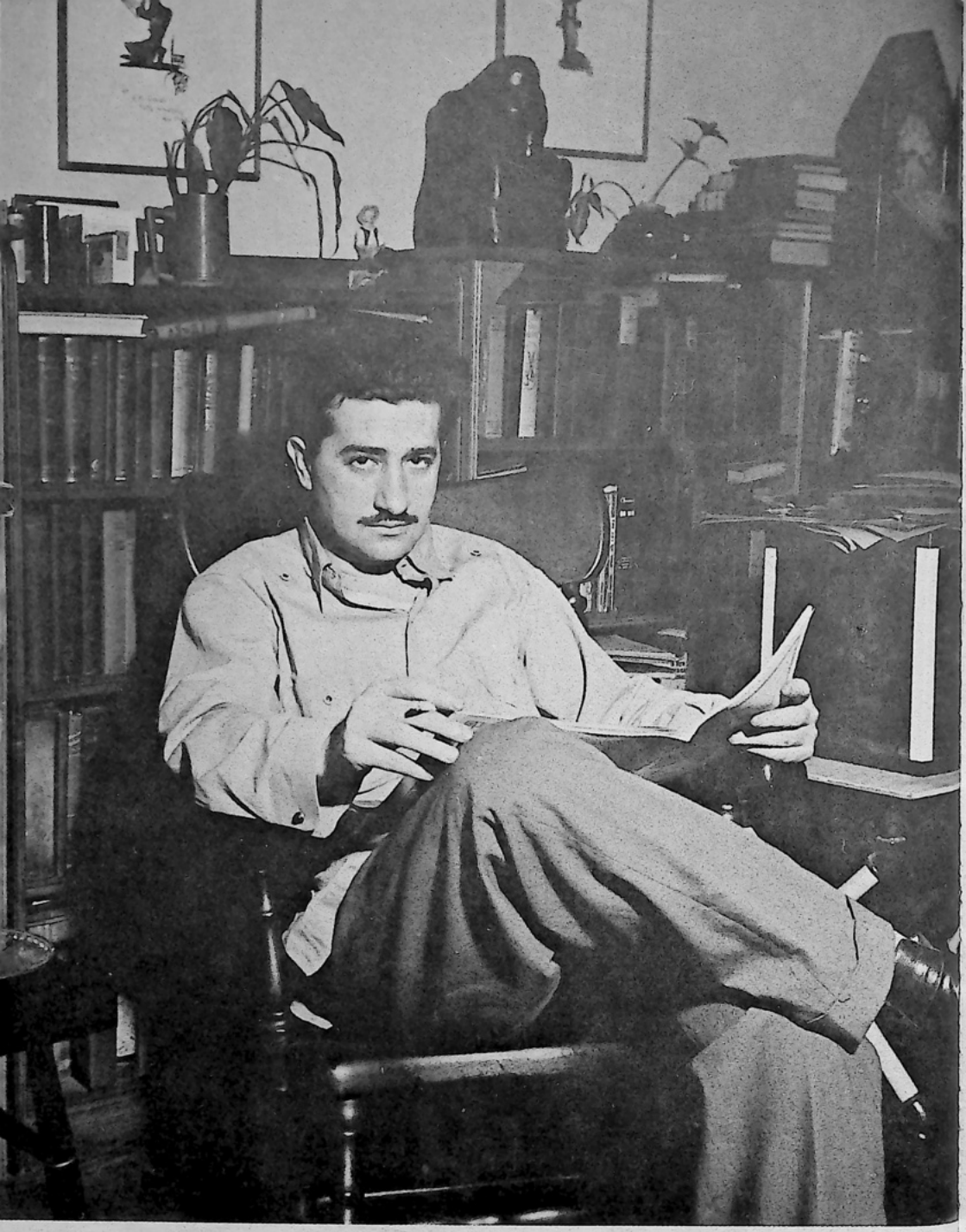

quasi Cadenza
pizz.
a poco a poco string.
a poco a poco rit.
poco dim.
in tempo
lunga
tranquillo
dolce
ritard.
a tempo
or I
II
IIIa
IVa

III


Violoncello
f
fz
fff
mf
dim.
molto string.
4 Poco meno mosso
molto rit.
p dolce
a tempo
p tranquillo
pp rit.
mf animato
5 in tempo
molto rit.
85025

a poco a poco acceler.
Tempo I^o
f
Restez
Remain
ff
tr
17
a tempo

mf appassionato
Remain
Restez
p
dim.
IIa
pp
Restez
Remain
Tempo Io
molto rit.
p semplice
7
8
16
Andante
Oboe
rit.
9
Moderato
p molto e cantabile
string.

Tempo I° ♩= 104
f molto ritard.
f
.f
ritard.
⑩ in tempo ♩= 104
fp
⑪ Meno mosso ♩= 84
molto tranquillo
mf
p


cresc.
string - - - al - - - - -
Tempo I°
molto espress.
string.
in tempo
molto ritard.
on string

Violoncello
cresc.
ff
fp
cresc.
ff
ff risoluto
in tempo
35025


Violoncello
ff
dolce
f
Meno mosso
mp
dim.
poco a poco
ritard.
14 Più andante
p
pp
pp
or
fz
sfz
f
espressivo molto
dim.
15 Andante maestoso
17
pp ritard.
e cresc. molto
ff
350Z5

"I do not believe that fingerings should be set until the music is fully understood and the player is well along the way to establishing his interpretation of the work.



William Lincer relaxes in his studio at home.

William Lincer

William Lincer was born in New York City on April 6, 1907. He began the violin at age five and gave his first recital when he was seven-and-a-half. His teachers were Leopold Lichtenberg, Samuel Gardner and Erica Morini. Lincer graduated from the Institute of Musical Art at Juilliard School of Music, and in 1936 joined the Gordon String Quartet as violist. In 1942 he was solo violist with the Cleveland Orchestra, and in 1943 became solo violist with the New York Philharmonic until his retirement in 1974. During that time he appeared frequently as soloist with the orchestra and participated in the Casals Festival in Prades. He has been a recipient of the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Chamber Music Award. Lincer is presently on the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music. He has edited and transcribed many works for viola published by Viola World, Inc.

William Lincer has been teaching at Juilliard since 1969. Watching him work with students in his studio, we were greatly impressed with the numerous exercises he would prescribe for strengthening their fingers and developing their arm muscles. We asked him what originally prompted his exercise methodology.

"It all started when I was in my teens, after I had an accident cleaning a gun. I received a wound in the palm of my left hand and was told I would never play again. For two years I couldn't open my fingers, and when I did manage to force them open, I was unable to close them. But I was determined to play again, so I went to the library and read all the books on anatomy and physiology that I could find, and devised my own exercises to restore the use of my hand to full function. As a result of this harrowing accident, I am ever aware of, and particularly sympathetic and sensitive to problems that some students suffer in relation to muscles that do not respond properly. From this experience, I developed exercises that I give my students whenever there is a weakness in their playing."

"How did you happen to take up the viola?" we asked.

"That's a good story. When I was at the Institute and just about to graduate, my teacher, Samuel Gardner, told me that I was expected to take a secondary exam on the viola. This was only a day before I was to play. I had never played the viola before that

William Lincer at the age of 8.

time. I borrowed a viola from a friend, got a copy of the E-flat Brahms' Viola Sonata, and stayed up all night teaching myself to play it. The next day, at the time of the examination, I walked on stage and began to play the Brahms. After playing a few pages, I stopped—thinking they heard enough. Conrad Held, who taught violin and secondary piano at the Institute, was my accompanist. He told me to go on playing and said the jury was very much impressed. Later he told me that everyone admired my sound and thought I should continue to play the viola. If it were not for that episode, I probably would never have taken up the viola. I took their advice and formed a string quartet which included my wife.

A few years later I auditioned and was accepted as a member of the Gordon String Quartet. I was with the Quartet for seven years, touring the U.S. and Canada. We performed at the Library of Congress every year. Our programs embraced the entire repertoire of that time, and we played the Beethoven cycle many times.

"Do you think that it is necessary for a violist to have a background of violin?"

"Yes, I think it is vital. In my opinion, the players who start out strictly on the viola have a handicap. They seldom, if ever, develop the type of facility that a violinist acquires. They are usually sluggish. They respond slowly."

"Even if they start the viola at an early age?"

"Let me put it this way. I cannot remember having heard a youngster, or having taught a youngster who started on the viola, acquire the kind of fluent technique that violinists attain after having studied six, seven or eight years on the violin before switching to the viola."

"Have you always taught?"

"I've been teaching since 1927. In 1929 I supervised five schools out in Long Island, while I was still a youngster. Later, I became principal in the New York Philharmonic for 29 years, and before that, I was principal in the Cleveland Orchestra. In fact, Rodzinski told me when he came to New York to sign his contract, that he wouldn't sign unless I also signed mine with the Philharmonic. I played under such great conductors as Bruno Walter, Toscanini, Rodzinski, Monteux, Reiner, Szell, Munch, Bernstein and many others."

"As a principal violist under all these conductors, did you have to change your style of playing to suit each individual's interpretation?"

"Well, before we talk about styles of playing, let's discuss the behavior and psychology of a principal player. With each conductor, we have to figure out exactly how to satisfy him musically, technically, and personally.

"Fortunately, I learn quickly. In fact, Szell used to say, 'It's a pity, Bill, that you don't play the violin, because I'd let you be my concertmaster. You seem to sense exactly what I'm going to do, four bars before I do it.' That's the secret of being a successful orchestra principal, divining exactly what a conductor wants in advance. I don't know whether it's an inborn faculty, but it must have been well developed in me because most of the conductors like my work. There are many outstanding players, but some have no instinct for leading a section. I think I had natural ability for leading a section, at least that's what conductors and other musicians have told me. Anticipating what a conductor wants is an art in itself. If the stick didn't tell us, such things as his body

movements, his mood, or a certain look in his eye, or even the way he breathed—something about him told you how he wanted the music to be played. You can transmit these sensitive nuances to your section very easily by the way you move your body and the speed with which you move your bow, as well as the way you give oral directions. Like a conductor, a section leader, too, must telegraph what he desires in advance, so that his section senses when he wants to move faster or slower, or play louder or softer. Otherwise, they cannot play in ideal ensemble rapport. In the Philharmonic unless the conductor specifically demanded it, we never marked a bowing in the viola part; the section followed me implicitly. And my partner would do exactly what I did. My assistant was very fine, so I had no problem, and I also had a very good anchor man in the middle of the section who could transmit information very well."

"The style now is to rotate players in some orchestras. What do you think of this?"

"It may be good for some individual players, to help keep them on their toes, but I don't think it is beneficial to the section because the musicians get accustomed to living with each other like in an intimate family. On a single stand, one player turns the pages and keeps the house clean by erasing all the bad markings, while the other fellow plays. If two fellows happen to be compatible, it's a marvelous situation for both of them. I got along famously with my partner. In fact, we had such ideal rapport, I hardly knew he was there! The parts were perfectly marked and the pages turned on time. I never had a problem. He was always right together with me—never made a mistake."

"What happens when a section leader is not happily paired?"

"Well, I had a couple of bad pairings when I was in the Philharmonic, and we just had to change personnel. It became impossible to function properly. We had one man for example, whom we finally had to send to another orchestra because he played 'clinkers' every other bar. He never practiced. Once he had gotten the job, he no longer thought it was necessary to prepare his work."

"Do you think individual members of your section thought they could do the job as well as you, as in many orchestra sections?"

William Lincer at 41. Lincer started teaching in 1927 when he supervised five Long Island schools.

"Perhaps. But I can tell you this. Many of the men who came down in front to fill in an absentee vacancy would say, 'Bill, I'm glad I'm sitting back where I am. This is a terribly rough job up here. Too much pressure and responsibility.'

"You know, the section leader must be on his toes at all times. I used to go over all the parts I had to perform before I went to play the concert—and very meticulously. I would try to re-create the conductor's interpretation in my mind, and seek out all the spots in the printed part where we might have some serious problem."

"Do you think young people today fully understand what it means to play principal in an orchestra?"

"I suppose I shouldn't say this for publication, but many young people today don't realize the degree of responsibility involved in being an honest-to-goodness section leader. In preparing my own students, I strive not only to ready them for job competition, but how to do the job right once they are hired."

"If a player sits on the last stand in a section, does he not have to anticipate a bit because of the distance factor?"

"In a 12-man section there are actually two basic segments. There's the principal and his assistant who must transmit informa-

Left to right: violinist John Corigliano, cellist Leonard Rose, conductor Bruno Walter and Lincer.

Lincer with Dimitri Mitropoulos.

tion on both sides; then you have somebody down in the center on the third stand to send information back farther, and he has to be just as alert and sensitive as the player on the first stand. He must even think a split-second ahead of the man down in front who is charged with the main responsibility. The players in the far rear must always keep one eye on the key man in the middle, because the section principal is simply too far away. Unfortunately, an orchestra is not set up with an eye to performance or intrasection acoustical practicality. One violist is near the trombones, another, over by the percussion—poor fellows."

"Playing in a section has been described as 'being part of a stream of sound' and that if one ever finds himself outside this stream, he is in trouble. Do you agree with this?"

"Yes, that's a good way to describe it. The whole idea is to strive for a completely unified sound in the section. If you can hear yourself, that's bad; you're not with the section. You should be in this 'stream of sound' which means: the same type vibrato, the same pressure and speed of bow. You must move at exactly the same rate of speed so that you produce the same kind of timbre of sound. You would be surprised at how many players are not sensitive to that."

"You mean, comparable to a string quartet—four different players, each with a different, yet similar, way of playing?"

"Exactly, that's what we should be doing in larger orchestral string choirs, and that's quite a job!"

"You have always had impeccable intonation. How did you maintain your intonation, playing in an orchestra every day of your life?"

"Yes, I always demanded that of myself. When I used to come home from the N.Y. Philharmonic rehearsal I would have to clean up my intonation. It only takes one day to develop bad intonation. When you are playing with the brass you are playing with one pitch; when you are playing with the woodwinds you are influenced by another pitch. When you play with the cello section you play with a pitch other than that of the violins. The viola is somewhere in between everybody. Each choir you play with requires a degree of pitch alteration. So by the time you get home, your fingers and ears have been subject to four or five slightly different pitches. It would take me a half to three-quarters of an hour, every day carefully practicing intonation studies to reestablish my intonation. I would check everything with open strings, practice thirds, sixths, octaves, scales and arpeggios, up and down, till I could go back to work and play in tune for the next session. I did this every day of my professional life."

"Do you need much preparatory work to properly warm up?"

"Yes, I do. When you sleep at night, for example, the skin of the hand contracts. When you get up in the morning you have to stretch and exercise your hands to warm them up. I've heard Heifetz practice octaves that sounded almost like consecutive 7ths when he started to warm up because his hands weren't stretched yet. Skin and muscle stretching should be done right in the morning to tone up the fingers for work. This must be a daily routine.

"I'll never forget one year when I went on a vacation and didn't play for two weeks. I came home and there was a telephone call for a job to record for a motion picture. I went to the studio with my viola thinking it would be a full orchestra, and all I was going to do was to play afterbeats. But as soon as I sat down, I suddenly realized I was the only violist, and the entire cue was for solo

"When I used to come home from the N.Y. Philharmonic rehearsal I would have to clean up my intonation. It only takes one day to develop bad intonation."

The Gordon String Quartet. Shown are: William Lincer, Jacques Gordon, David Sackson and Naoum Benditsky.

drum and viola! So, for six hours I simply sweated blood; my fingers wouldn't function, I hadn't been properly prepared to play, and I vowed that it would never happen to me again as long as I live. Since then, I have never stopped practicing for a single day."

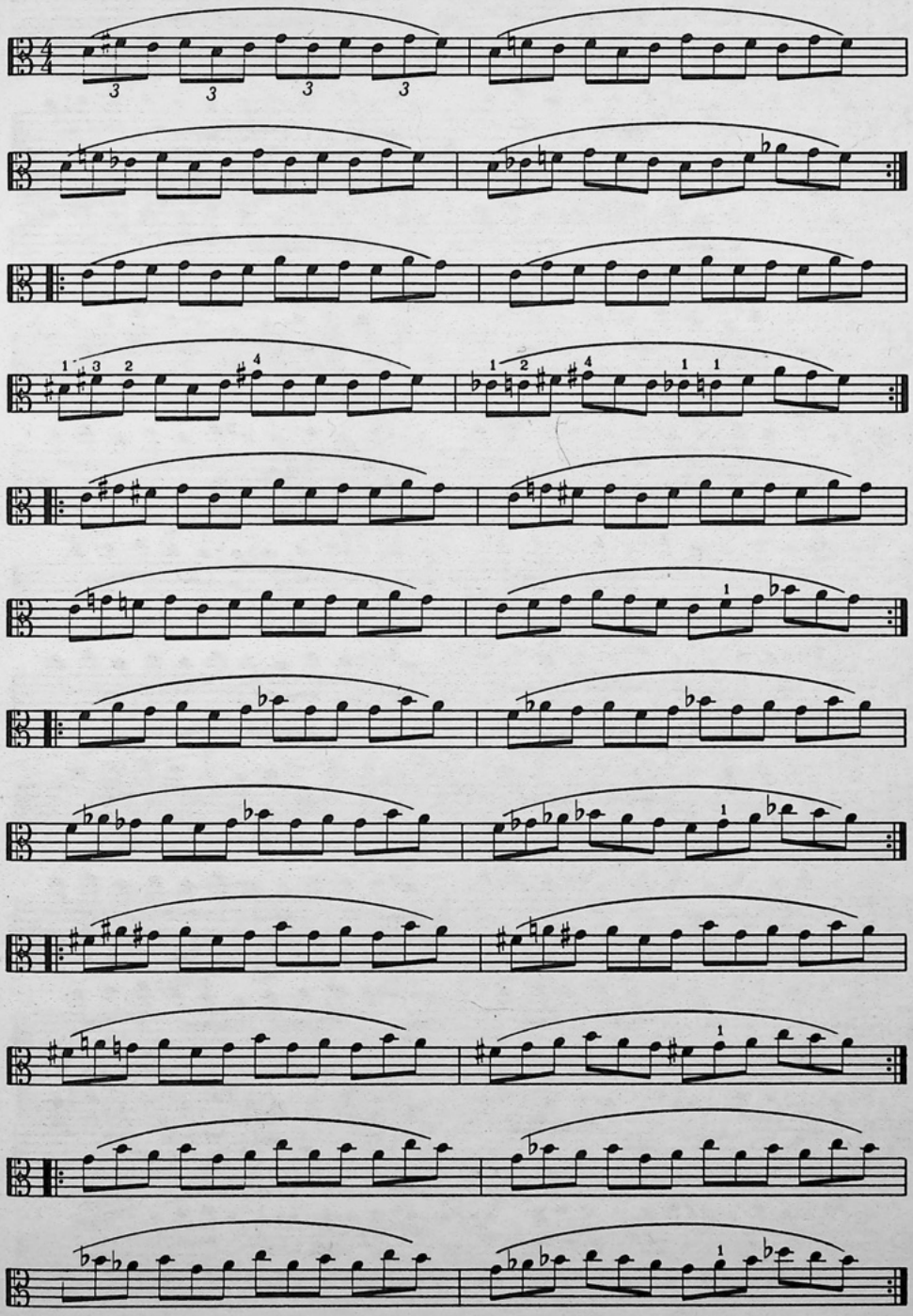
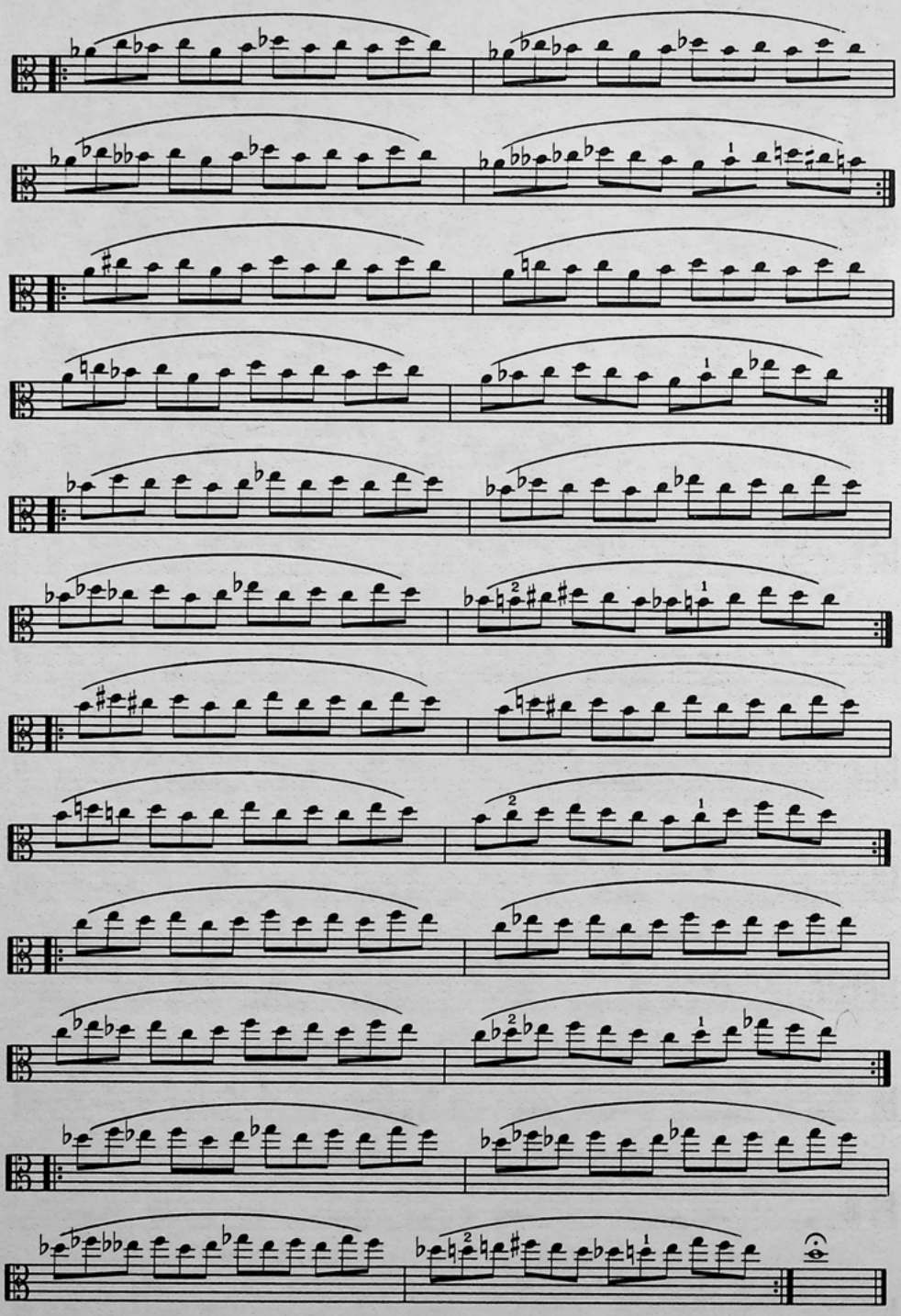
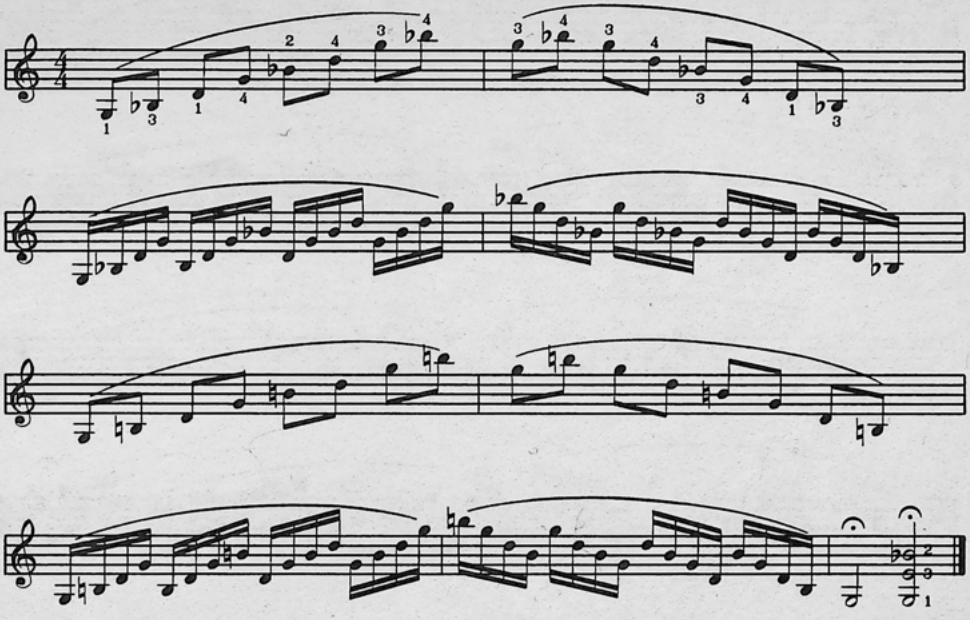
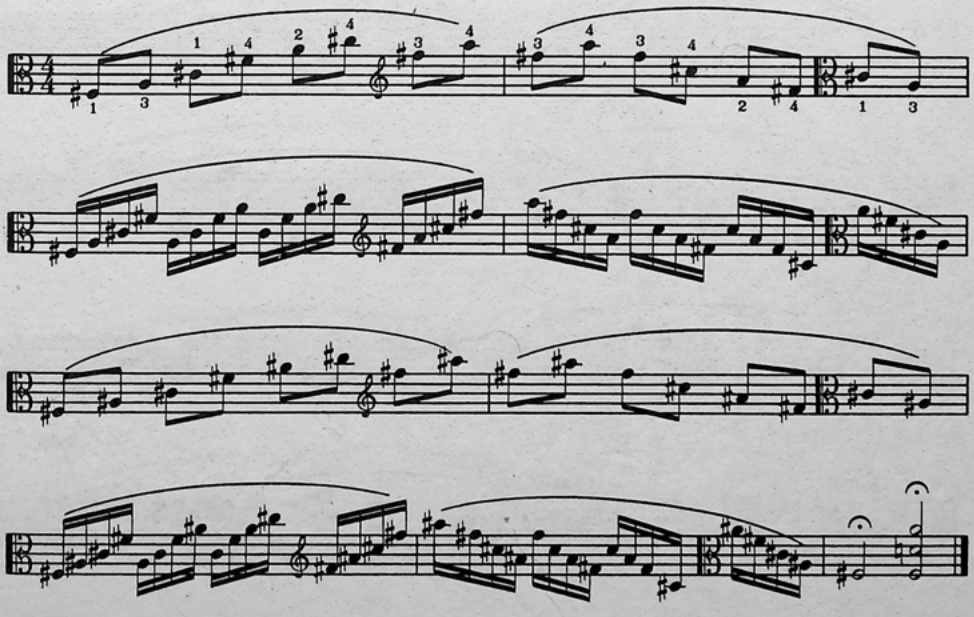
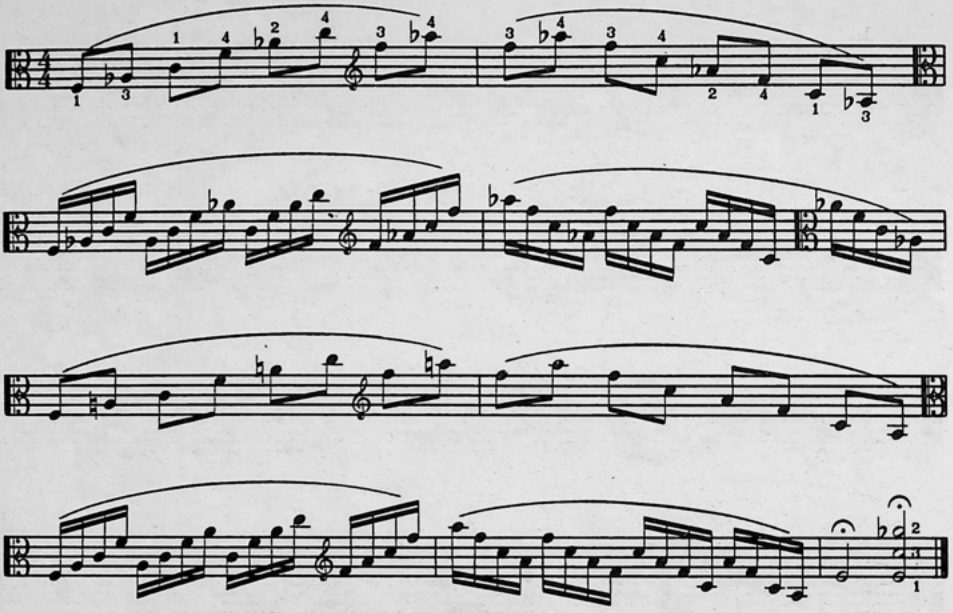
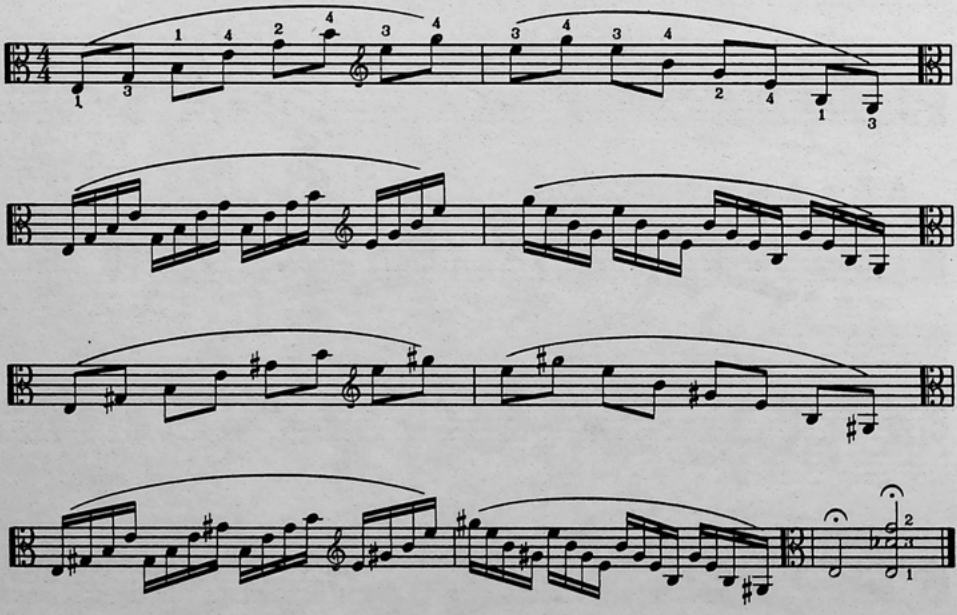
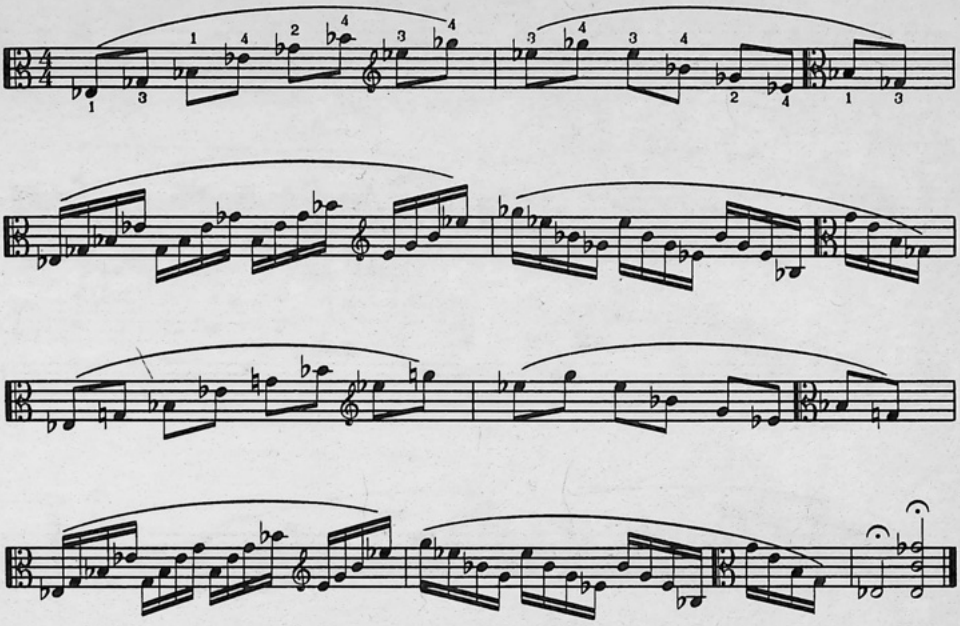
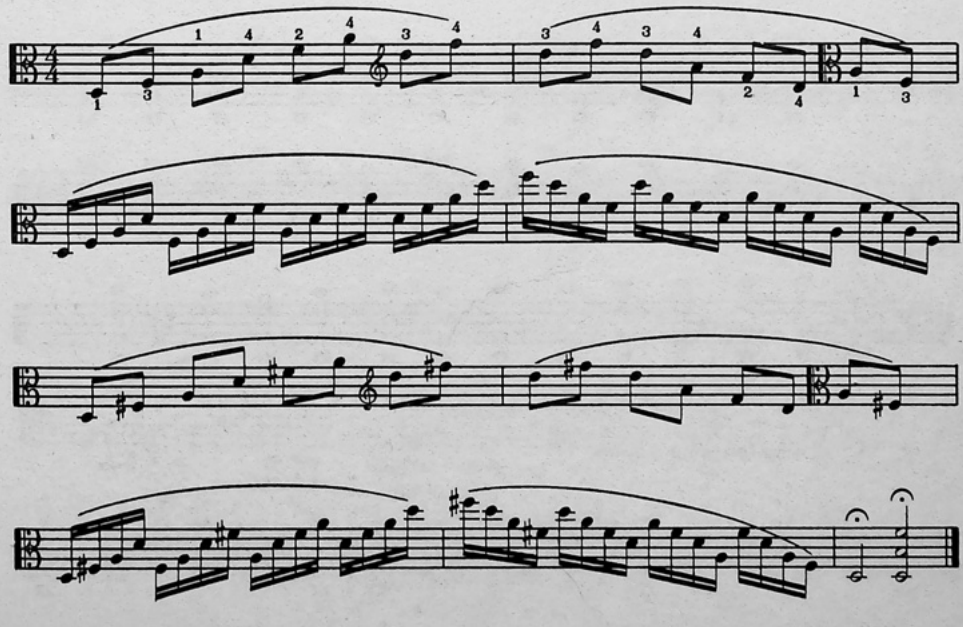
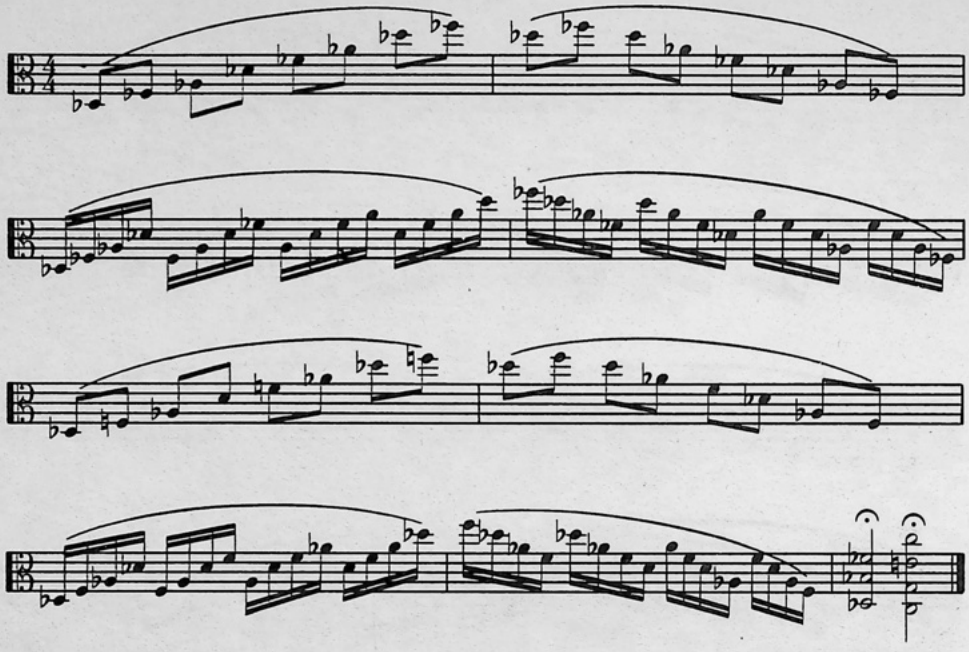
"Do you have any special exercises for maintaining intonation and facility?"

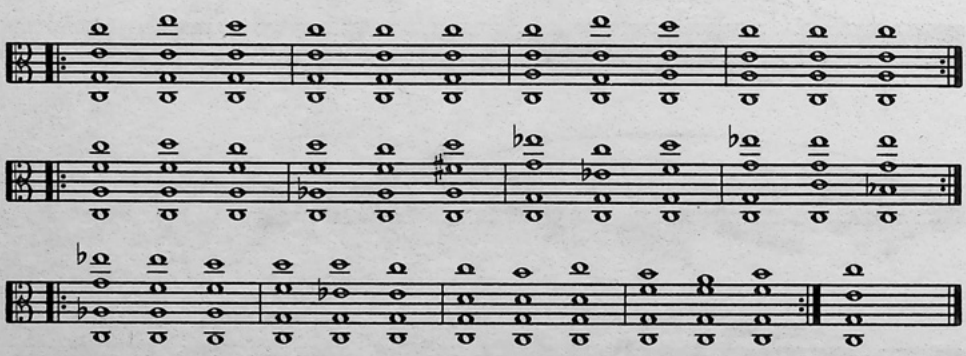
"Yes. You see, a string player should approach muscular exercise in the same way as an athlete does before performing in a gymnasium or athletic contest. The only difference is that we exercise from the waist up—athletes from the feet up. Muscles cannot be kept in top condition without daily toning."

LINCER'S GYMNASIUM DAILY PRACTICE

"I have evolved these daily studies that promote technical mastery of the left and right hands. If they are used daily in conjunction with vibrato exercises which I have also developed, this will serve to enhance beauty of tone, and give the violist a heightened sense of security on his instrument."

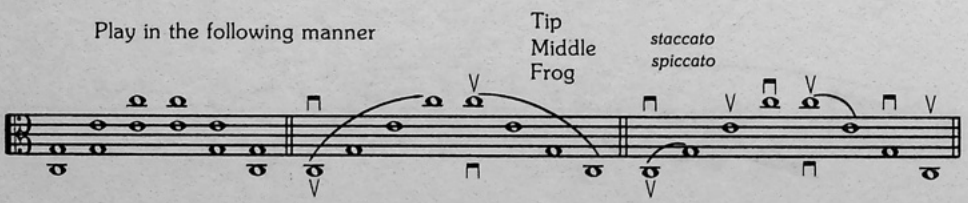
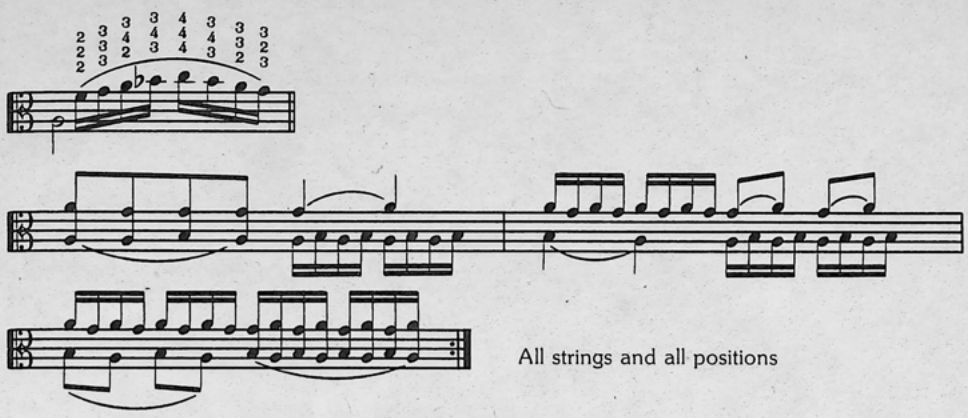
DAILY WARM-UP STUDY

To be practiced on all four strings



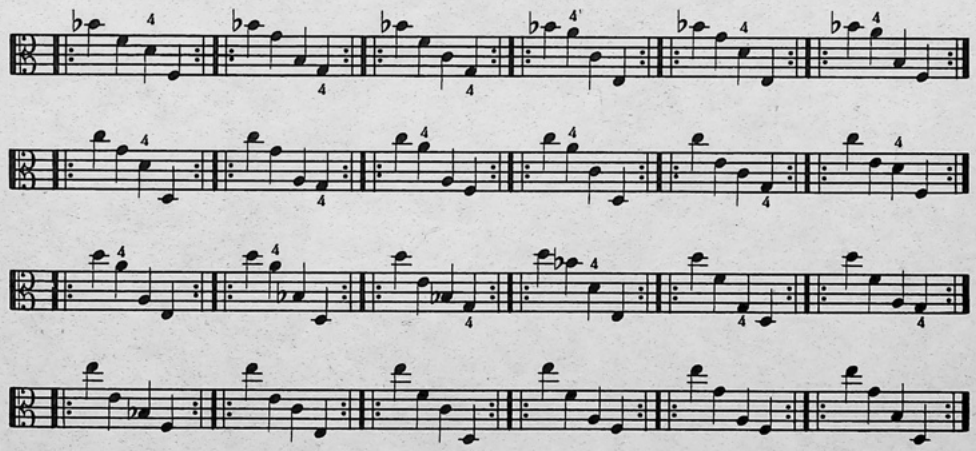
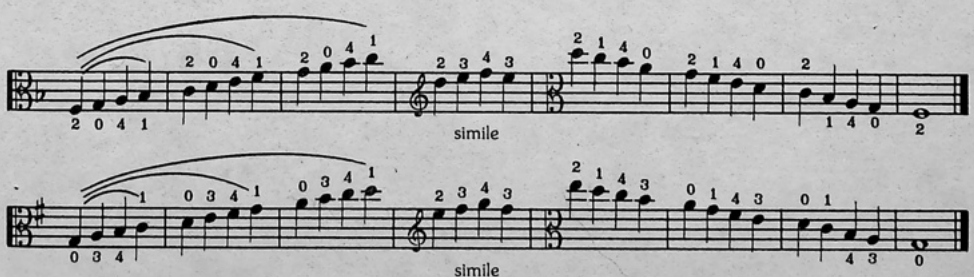
Bow Study

Play in the following manner

Tip
Middle
Frog

staccato
spiccato



All strings and all positions

Keep fingers down. Set fingers on four strings

Right and left hand independence

William Lincer with Pablo Casals at rehearsal during the Prades, France festival.

"We are now going to ask you questions that concern every young musician. Please give us your opinion about *auditions*, something all of us face at one time or another in our musical lives. After 31 years of sitting in on string auditions, what advice would you give to a string student going for an audition?"

"The first advice I give him or her is to go in prepared to play more music than the audition requirements have stipulated. Don't come in with one movement of a concerto; come in with an entire concerto. I've seen candidates come up and play the first movement of the Mendelssohn Concerto, and when they are asked to play the slow movement, they tell the auditioning committee they don't have it ready for audition. Now, it is utterly ridiculous for a person who wants a job in a big orchestra to come and say he is prepared to play one movement of a concerto! Can anyone blame the judges for looking at each other in disbelief; only *one* movement of a concerto? True, that's all that was required, but suppose someone wants to hear the third movement?"

"Second suggestion—make as little fuss as possible. Keep talk to a minimum. Merely answer any questions that may be asked. If you should make a mistake, ask them if you can look at the music for a second, and play it over again. Do that, too, if the part is exceptionally difficult. For example, we had one conductor who made a practice of giving candidates impossible parts to play. I don't believe anybody has been able to sightread some of these things—particularly certain contemporary works. No matter how good the musician, these must be practiced beforehand."

"In such a dilemma, what should the auditioning musician do?"

"The best way to handle it is to ask: 'Can you give me a minute or two to look over the music and finger it?' Most of the committees will give the player this courtesy. Go over it and quickly set the fingering. It may not be the best fingering in the world, but pick whatever fingering you can, remember what it is and use it. Grab as many accidentals as you can. Make certain of the rhythm and tempo before starting. And be sure to check the key. Once you have decided on a fingering, don't change it when playing, even if it is not the best fingering. Making instant changes under such pressure conditions can be very dangerous. If you reach the audition finals, the conductor may wish to conduct you in one

or two of the orchestral excerpts. He does this because he wants to see whether you are able to follow him as he changes tempos, to see how flexible you are and how well you can follow his direction. In this situation, I strongly advise the player to keep one eye on the music and the other on the conductor.

"Remember this. It is almost impossible to play an audition perfectly under these conditions. The important thing to remember is that if one makes a mistake, do not focus the mind on that mistake, and as a result, spoil the rest of the performance. Ignore the error and concentrate on the passages that follow.

"When you are finished with the audition, say 'thank you,' and leave the stage as quickly as you can."

"Have you had any humorous experiences while judging auditions?"

Lincer laughed. "I certainly have. I can remember, for example, one man who came in for an audition, a rather elderly man, and he said, 'Is this where everybody tries out for the Philharmonic?' We said, 'yes.' He said, 'I want to play for you.' So we said 'Fine, come in and play.' I asked, 'What would you like to play?' He replied, 'I will play a Czardas.' 'A Czardas—fine, let's hear it.' So he played a type of Czardas that you hear in a Rumanian restaurant while you're eating, and in an untutored Gypsy manner. He finished, and I said 'Do you have anything else?' He said, 'No, that's it.' 'Would you like to do a little sightreading?' 'What do you mean?' 'Just try to read a little music that I put up in front of you.' 'All right.' So I put up Strauss's *Don Juan.* He looked at it suspiciously. Of course, he couldn't read two bars. He struggled and struggled. After he finished, we felt sorry for him and decided to let him play a little longer. We put up something simpler. The playing was still awfully bad. We said, 'Fine, thank you very much.' He packed up and started to go. He went, reached the door, came back again and asked 'Tell me, do I get the job?' I said, 'Usually they inform you by mail if you get the position. We can't tell you now because there are so many people still waiting to play.' This is a true story. We've had all kinds of characters like that. It's simply amazing how some players are totally incapable of evaluating their own ability, or lack of it."

"What do you tell a student who is desolate about having failed at an audition?"

"I advise the player to forget it and start immediately to prepare for the next audition. I explain that occasional failure is part and parcel of living, and that self-pity is a waste of time. There is no percentage in worrying about yesterday. They must try to learn whatever they can from the experience and do better in the future."

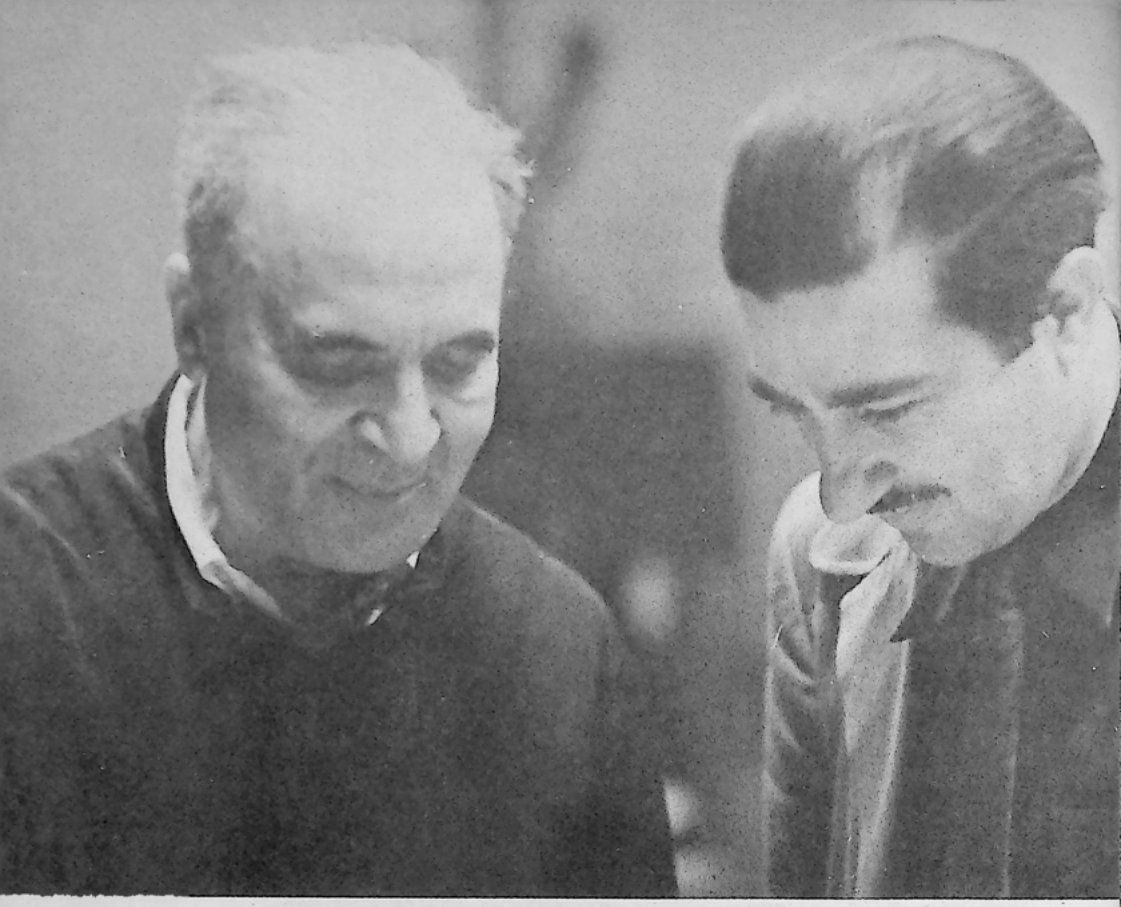
"Do you ever get an attack of 'nerves' before, or while you are playing?"

"When I was in my early teens, I used to get so nervous that my eyes would tear, my nose would run and my knees would wobble. As I grew up and realized that music would be my profession, I recognized that I had to cope with the situation. I learned that the most important thing is to be prepared. Second is to feel that playing is an enjoyable activity. When you make a sound, you have to love the sound you make. You have to become one with that sound. When you step up to play, as soon as you put the bow down on the string you must be transported to a private world of your own, oblivious to what is going on elsewhere, totally involved in what you are striving to produce and communicate on the instrument. There is also the question of sheer physical tension. To relieve this, I advocate doing a few simple setting-up exercises with the arms and legs before going on stage, to relax the muscles, much as an athlete does. And some slow, deep, rhythmic breathing is also helpful in calming the nerves."

"We would like to get back to the matter of orchestra auditions. Are you in favor of having applicants play behind a screen?"

"Well, I don't know. Suppose, for example, if a chimpanzee were to play a marvelous audition, would you recommend that he be taken into the orchestra?" Lincer chuckled. "Of course, I'm being facetious. But there are such considerations as the visual projection of a player, and his deportment on the stand in relation to his partner. I have seen players who cannot take a down-bow without threatening to poke their stand partner in the eye. Or one who habitually sticks the scroll of his instrument in his partner's face. I once had a partner who did this. I used to tell him to please move it out of my face, or at least, if he wanted me to eat it for breakfast to put a little salt on it so that it would taste better."

Lincer's sense of humor drew a round of laughs, but he suddenly became serious and said, "May I tell you my own personal



***William Lincer with Bruno Walter at a rehearsal of Richard Strauss'* Don Quixote.**

theory on how to conduct a fair and revealing audition?" We were all ears.

The violist expounded. "I believe that the essential factor in selecting a musician for a string section position is to determine how he actually plays in ensemble. If it were up to me, I would ask the candidate to sit down with three regular string players of the orchestra and invite him to select any quartet from the repertoire that he desired. We would play it with him. Then, if he plays accurately, has a lovely sound, follows when he's supposed to follow, leads when he's supposed to lead, understands the style of the music, and yes, 'sits well' with the group, we would ask him to do a little sightreading—some quartet he doesn't know.

"That type of test would be good enough to convince me of his ability. Anyone who can play in a string quartet or similar ensemble intelligently, can fit into any orchestra. In fact, how do you think I got into a symphony orchestra? When I became a member

of the Cleveland Orchestra, my main experience had been seven years with the Gordon String Quartet. I didn't have orchestral experience, but I knew how to play in ensemble, studied my scores carefully each week, kept a sharp eye on everything that was going on around me. And I became the principal violist of a great orchestra—living proof that my theory of how to conduct an audition is feasible and foolproof."

"But what about the concept of auditions with player behind a screen, hidden from the jury?"

"I'm opposed to it! Yes, on paper it sounds like a perfect way to prevent discrimination against candidates for reason of sex, or to keep the jury from being unduly influenced by a candidate's previous reputation—be it good or poor. But in actual practice, you see, it doesn't really work, at least, not for me. I can't recall discrimination being practiced against any player in any audition in which I participated as a member of the jury."

We could not help but wish that all auditions and competitions were conducted with such selflessness and integrity. At this juncture, we felt it would be enlightening and helpful to learn what qualities Lincer and his jurist colleagues looked for in selecting a violist for an orchestra position.

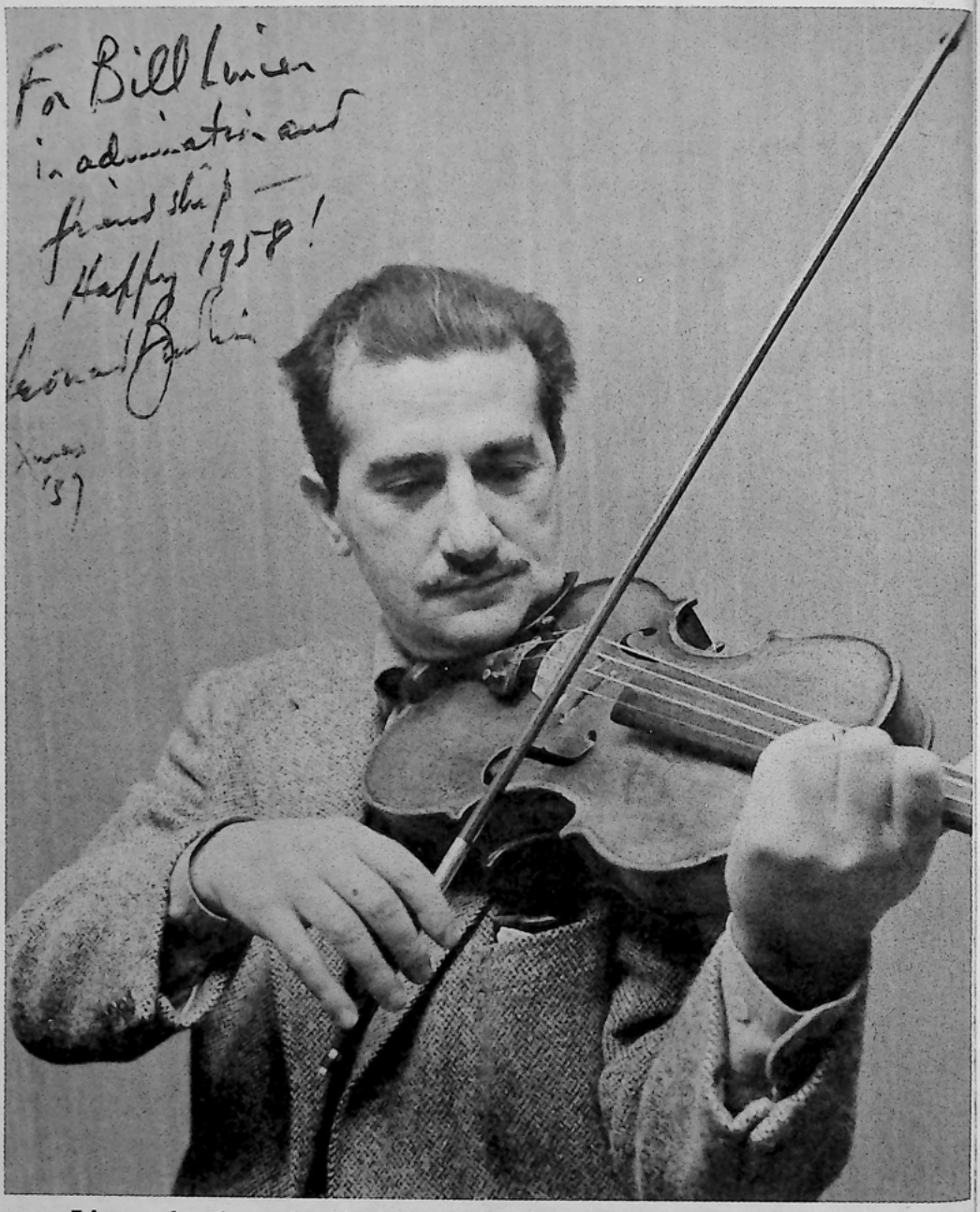
Said Lincer, "We are seeking a person who has fluent facility on the instrument and is currently in top technical form, with a vibrato that is flexible and capable of producing more than one type of tone color in a given phrase. The candidate's bow arm is of prime importance. His down-bow and up-bow should be equally strong, with crisp, firm articulation, smooth legato, and well-controlled in spiccato and saltando strokes.

"His phrasing must reflect musical intelligence and the style of the composer. It is also vital that he be 'quick on the trigger'—able to correct a mistake instantly, on the second try—not on the fourth or fifth. And of course it goes without saying that he must habitually follow the dynamic markings and changes of key signature with care. A player who cannot maintain regularity of rhythm or tempo will probably be rejected. And any eccentric or unusual behavior, physically, musically or in conversation, would certainly militate against the candidate."

"How much importance do you give to the candidate's sightreading ability, or lack of it, in making your decision?"

Tek Fone

On tour with the New York Philharmonic. Left to right: William Lincer, Walter Hendl, John Corigliano and Leonard Rose. They have an early model of a portable (you wound it up by hand!) record player on which they are playing Khachaturian.



Lincer in the role of viola solist. Note his 'violinistic' position.

"We permit a certain amount of error, since there are many technical passages that simply cannot be read at sight. But we would prefer that the candidate be able to play the standard literature accurately. We don't expect him to make mistakes in a Beethoven, Brahms or Tchaikovsky Symphony—this should not be considered sightreading. And this goes even for Wagner or Richard Strauss. But the player would certainly be given more leeway in works by Bartok, Weber, Berg, Messaien, Penderecki or other 20th century composers. A committee usually makes allowances for unfamiliar extremely difficult contemporary works that must be practiced beforehand."

"Do you recommend that potential candidates for orchestral positions use published 'orchestra excerpt' books as a means of learning the difficult passages in the standard repertoire?"

"No. This can be disadvantageous. It is best to have the orchestra parts, which are also available from the publishers. Students can be misled by the excerpt books. They practice each difficult passage, but these are not necessarily printed in sequence, so that when the musicians actually come face-to-face with the complete printed music, it looks strange and has but little relationship to the brief excerpts they have practiced."

"How do you teach your pupils to sightread?"

"Learning to sightread is a comparatively simple procedure. However, it does require concentration and application. To develop this ability, begin by looking at a single measure of unfamiliar music for 1 or 2 seconds, then turning away from the music and playing it from memory. If you find you are not successful the first time, examine the same measure again for a second or two, look away and try again to play it from memory. Keep repeating this until you can play the measure perfectly.

"In trying to play that bar from memory immediately, your attention was focused on reading the music quickly, and fixing the notes, the fingerings and bowings in your mind.

"The goal is to try to read—not one note at a time, but to see and recognize *patterns* of notes that you finger and bow almost instantaneously. Of course, this is a technique exclusively for sightreading.

"Although it may seem contradictory, sightreading includes an aspect of memorization; the kind of memorization that refers back

to your entire musical experience, which enables you to select and make judgments based on that experience. You utilize your past experience in recognizing patterns and automatically use the fingerings and bowings most familiar to you.

"When you are sightreading, it must be as though you are reading in a language that is your mother tongue, and not one with which you are barely familiar—as if reading one word at a time.

"Getting back to the technique of learning to sightread. After succeeding with the first measure, go on to the next one. Look at it for a second or two, turn away from the music, and try to play it from memory. Do the same with each successive bar. Then, extend your effort—using the same method with 2 measures at a time. With this system, you can dramatically increase your ability to concentrate, to grasp, retain and perform larger groupings!

"Eventually, one develops the skill to scan a complete work, as for instance at a recording session, single out the difficult passages, finger and bow them quickly in the mind, and recall them when the session begins.

"I have found that my students who follow this procedure have been very successful in learning to sightread well."

"How do you feel about the factor of emotion in music?"

"Emotion is the heart and soul—the very essence of music. As a discipline, the expression of emotion has not generally been taught in a systematic way. The student all too often imitates the teacher's feeling and style of playing. Very little has been done to teach the expression or transference of the player's emotions to his performance of music.

"It is true there are many cues and directions written in the music that help us determine certain aspects of expression and musical phrasing. Some of these are the melodic line, rhythmic variants, harmony, dynamics, etc., etc. But even more important, there is an inner life that expresses the emotions of the composer. Each composer has a unique way of looking at life and expressing himself musically. He may be romantic, devoutly religious, or a libertarian. But whatever—his points of view are integral components of his music; we must search them out and learn how to express them. We should specifically seek out composer identification. Any state of feeling in response to the environment can be expressed (from the composer's point of view) in musical terms. Our

task is to find these points of view and illuminate these moods and shades of feeling.

An important publication is "Emotion and Meaning in Music" by Prof. Meyer of the University of Chicago. Another recent publication worthy of serious consideration is "Sentics—the Touch of the Emotions" by Dr. Manfred Clynes. This book deals directly—through the exercise of a wide range of emotions—with how we experience and communicate these emotions in music.

"I have read that we must look at ourselves and the world through three different mentalities; each with its own intelligence, sense of time and space, memory, motor and other functions. This new view of a triune brain, as postulated by Dr. Paul MacLean in his work "The Triune Concept of the Brain and Behaviour" opens up many new areas of exploration for the teacher and student. It is possible to envision an exciting future for us as progress in these new areas develop."

We sought to end our discussion on a lighter note. "Mr. Lincer," we said, "you must have had many unusual experiences with conductors, perhaps even some that are humorous. Could you please recall one for us?"

"O.K. This is one I'll never forget. It was in my first year with the New York Philharmonic. Rodzinski had just been appointed Director, but Bruno Walter was the guest conductor for this particular concert. We were to play *Don Quixote,* and Joseph Schuster the cellist, and I were at Maestro Walter's home, going over our solos with him.

"The only time I had ever played under Walter was in the previous week's concert, and he didn't really know me. I played the opening solo viola passage and the maestro stopped me. 'Did you know,' he said, 'Sancho Panza was an idiot and ruffian? You play that passage too cultivated, too cultured.'

"Well, at that time I was a young brash kid, and I fear, not possessed of too much tact. 'But Maestro,' I said, 'have you ever read Don Quixote by Cervantes?' I could see Walter's face beginning to flush. 'Of course I have,' he cried. 'Well, if you've read the book, you should know that Sancho Panza was a normal man with lusty appetites. He wasn't an intellectual, but he was a confirmed humanist with a profound love of nature. Sancho led Don Quixote by the hand because he wanted to keep him out of trouble while he

On tour with the New York Philharmonic. John Corigliano, concertmaster and William Lincer.

Dr. Samuel Applebaum with his arm around William Lincer in a 1975 photograph.

was fighting windmills and doing other unconventional things.'

"By this time, Walter was mad as a hornet and brusquely interrupted my literary dissertation. 'Well, Mr. Lincer,' he said. 'Either you will play this work my way, or you won't play it at all.' I am convinced that Walter had become accustomed to the 'scratchy' way European violists of that time used to manhandle the Quixote solos. I said, huffily, 'let's not play it at all,' and started to pack up my viola.

"Then Joseph Schuster intervened. 'Bill,' he begged, 'please stay. I've been working on this part for a whole year.' He was close to tears. 'How can I play it his way, constantly scratching,' I retorted. Joe pleaded. 'Do it for my sake.'

"We finally patched things up, at least on the surface. I played my solo for him and went home. No sooner did I get in the door when I got a call from Maestro Rodzinski. 'Hello, Block Sol!' (he meant 'Black Soul'). 'Yes, Dr. Rodzinski, what's wrong?' I said. 'We've been here only a couple of weeks and already we're in trouble. I just got a call from the office. They said you refused to do what Walter wanted.

"Of course, I eventually placated both great maestros, whom I consider among my most esteemed friends. But looking back over the years, I shudder to recall how cantankerous I sometimes was, as a youngster, and this remembrance helps me to better understand the youth of today."

We all laughed at the story and then amiably bade our goodbyes to the eminent violist.

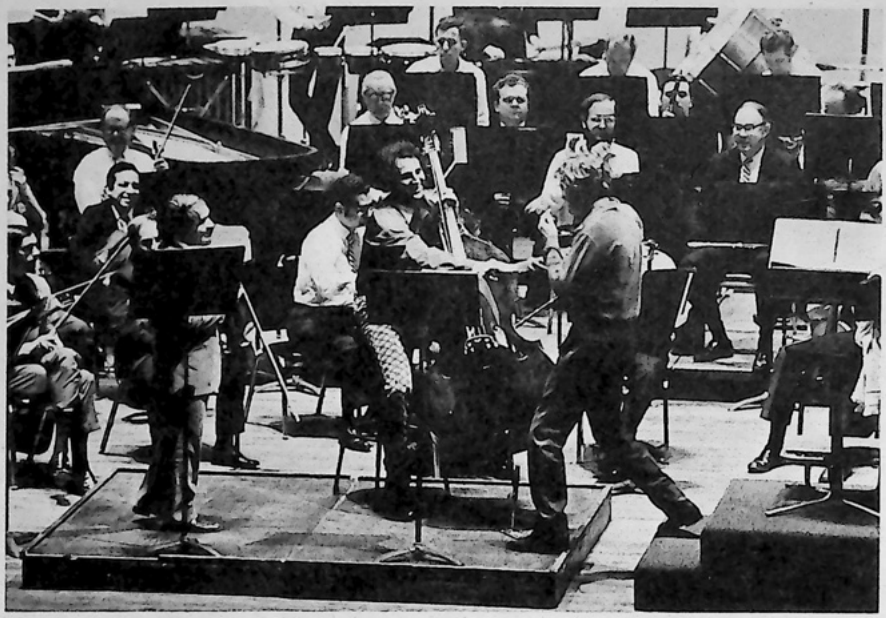
***BASS EVOLUTION:** Left to right are Jane Wagner, dancer; Worth Gardner, director and pianist; James Exum, dancer; and Barry Green, double bassist.*

Barry Green

Barry Green was born April 10, 1945, in Newark, New Jersey. His parents were accomplished musicians, though not professionals; his father played trumpet, his mother, violin. He started study of the accordion at age seven, continued for about eight years and plays that instrument well. At age 13 he took tuba lessons in junior high school, and at age 16, began study of the double-bass in conjunction with the tuba.

Green's first teacher was Herman Reinshagen, from whom he had only a half-dozen lessons shortly before Reinshagen's death. He then studied for one year with Nathan Gangursky, one-and-a-half years with Donald Homuth, two summers with Abe Luboff, two years with Murray Grodner and one year with János Starker. At age 19 Green decided to make the bass his career, and practiced eight to eleven hours a day. He became principal bassist of the Nashville Symphony at 21, a position he held for a year, then he accepted a similar post with the Cincinnati Symphony, which he has occupied for 12 years.

Green's activities and varied responsibilities are prolific. He has a Bachelor and Masters degree in double bass from Indiana University and the University of Cincinnati, respectively. The bassist has appeared as soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony, the only bassist to be so presented in subscription concerts. He has appeared in two American coast-to-coast tours as well as recitals in Europe. In addition to his post as principal bass of the Cincinnati Symphony, Green has a class of 15 pupils at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. In 1979 he joined the distinguished faculty of Indiana University School of Music as "Visiting Professor of Double Bass," in order to devote more time to teaching and concert tours. Currently on a "leave of absence" from the Cincinnati Symphony, Green is also founder-director of the International Summer School for Bass, a unique cooperative teaching project with a faculty of prominent bassists from Europe and America and 20 specially selected students. Green has also taught for the International Congress of Strings both in Los Angeles and Cincinnati and performs regularly with the Festival Casals Orchestra in Puerto Rico. Students of Green are members of such major orchestras as the New York Philharmonic (2), the Detroit, Dallas, Milwaukee, and Berlin Radio Symphonies, the Swiss Romande Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony and many other ensembles. He is the author of two books, "Fundamentals of Double Bass Playing" (in two parts, 1975), and has recorded five solo albums of Baroque, Romantic



Thomas Schippers congratulating Barry Green and Ruggiero Ricci after a successful rehearsal for the world premiere of Proto's* Concerto in One Movement for Violin, Double Bass and Orchestra. *October 13, 1973.

and Contemporary Music for the Double Bass (Piper Records, Box 1713, Cincinnati, Ohio). Green is also co-founder and Executive Director of the International Society of Bassists, a world-wide professional organization of over 2,000 members, and selects material for that organization's newsletter and journal. He has written numerous articles for "The Instrumentalist," "American String Teacher" and other musical publications, and has been a guest clinician at major universities throughout the United States.

An inveterate champion of contemporary music, Green is involved in pioneering musical theater that combines bass, voice and dance with classical and popular music. He is married to ballerina Jane Wagner; they have two children.

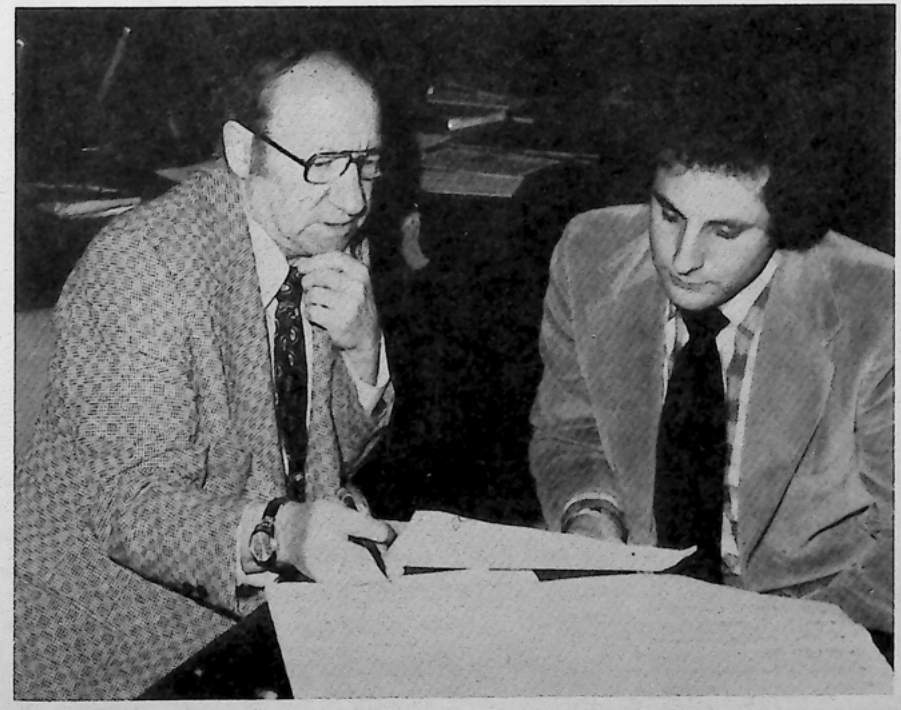
Our discussions with Barry Green encompassed two lengthy sessions, one at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel in New York, the other at the Roth residence in Hollywood, California. Green is an affable, articulate man who exudes constant enthusiasm for his work, a totally committed "missionary of the bass." Tall, strapping and

athletic in build, he is fully equal to any physical challenge posed by the pachyderm of the string family. We noticed, too, that he is naturally left-handed. The Green personality is one of sociability fortified by boundless energy. But in matters pertaining to the bass he is quite serious and scholarly, albeit in no wise academic. He gives the impression of an artist who is ever willing to test experimental ideas, for better or for worse, in pursuit of enlarging musical horizons and audience acceptance of the bass. Yet he has the self-assurance of a man who knows where he is going even though he will need to blaze some of the trails along the way. No doubt about it—Barry Green is a man who makes things happen, a 'go-getter'.

We asked, "Since your parents had such affection for music, did they urge you to make music your career?"

"Absolutely not. When they perceived that I was getting serious about music, they tried to discourage me. You see, at the

Co-author Dr. Samuel Applebaum discussing the Barry Green book on bass fiddle playing.



time I was a student, full-time music careers for bass players were neither plentiful nor economically tempting—that is, if one desired a year-round position with salary and fringe benefits equal to other professions that required many long years of intense work and training. Fortunately in this respect, things have very much improved in recent times. My parents feared that I would be unable to make a living at music, so they encouraged me to emphasize academic subjects at school and use music as a side-line."

"Tell us about your early training."

"Well, I played accordion for a considerable time, then took up the tuba when I was 13. They had an incredible music program at Sequoia Jr. High, which I attended, organized by Robert Delwarte. Out of 1,200 students in the school, 600 were in some type of musical ensemble. Then at 16, I started studying the bass with Herman Reinshagen."

"Did you learn much from him?"

"No, he died after I had only a half-dozen lessons with him. But even this brief encounter enabled me to get a solid start in the great bass tradition. As you know, in past years, Reinshagen of the New York Philharmonic, who played German bow, and Torelli of Philadelphia, who played French bow, were probably the two most influential bass teachers in America."

"With whom did you study next?"

"I spent a year with Nathan Gangursky. This was in Los Angeles where I did most of my growing up. However, at that time I was still not really serious about the bass. It was Abe Luboff, a symphonic and studio recording bassist, who finally 'turned me on' to music. He worked with me and literally taught me how to be my own teacher—how to listen to myself and how to practice. Luboff was the greatest influence in my development. I was not with him long, only two summers, but these were the most decisive months of my musical life. I recall how we played scales for eight hours a day. He prepared me for Indiana University. By that time I had definitely decided to seek a career in music. But before I went to Indiana I spent a year-and-a-half in liberal arts at San Jose State. I guess in terms of serious instrumental training I would be considered a 'late bloomer'."

"You certainly would. With whom did you study later?"

"Murray Grodner, for two years, and János Starker, for one."

Barry Green, director International School for Bass, receives acknowledgements from Bertram Turetzky, 20th century bass specialist, after performance of "Gamelan" music.

"Could you give us in brief your own estimation of what each teacher specifically contributed to your development?"

Green thought deeply for a moment, then remarked, "I would say that Luboff gave me the vital initial impetus toward a bass career as well as an analytical approach to the study of music. Grodner was primarily my teacher in repertoire, symphonic playing and general technique. He also gave me much helpful guidance on the personal level. Starker influenced me profoundly in solo playing—in such matters as the physical approach to the instrument, and hand positions, as well as phrasing, relaxation, musical literature, and even proper breathing. He was a master coach. The violinist—pedagogue Josef Gingold, too, was of enormous help in encouraging me toward a bass career, and the bassists Fred Zimmermann and Henry Portnoy, were also an inspiration to me. Max

Rudolf, who hired me at age 21 as principal bassist of the Cincinnati Symphony, has always remained a great musical and personal influence, as well as the late Tom Schippers, who personally commissioned Frank Proto to write a double concerto for violinist Ruggiero Ricci and myself, which we premiered on the subscription series of the Cincinnati Symphony."

"What études did you study with your various teachers?"

"Those of Storch, Hrabe, Simandl and Nanny."

"Did you enjoy practicing?"

"Yes, and I still do. I practice five to six hours a day before a solo concert. However, I admit that when I was younger, I sometimes became bored with the standard repertoire. As an antidote, I once learned and performed the Dvorak Cello Concerto on bass, and it actually got me the job as principal bassist in Cincinnati. But now that I am older and more mature, I have far more respect for the basic repertoire and I'm no longer in favor of sensa-

BASS EVOLUTION: Left to right are Jack Voorhies, choreographer; Worth Gardner; Barry Green; Candace Lovell, soprano; Jack Waldenmaier, composer; James Exum; and dancer Jane Wagner.

tionalistic stunts like the Dvorak. Now I aspire to do works specifically written for the bass, unless they happen to be legitimate transcriptions."

"Tell us something of your teaching, and of what your lessons consist."

"Right now I am an Adjunct Full Professor of Double Bass at the University of Cincinnati with about 15 pupils. My lessons run one hour, which is divided into three areas: basic technique, orchestral repertoire and solo literature. I also give seminars on chamber music, musical construction and solo playing."

"Do you encourage your most gifted pupils to seek a solo career?"

"No. There are still only one or two bassists in the world today making a successful full time solo career, though all my pupils study solo literature."

"Do you teach French or German bow?"

"I personally play German bow, but I also teach French bow. That's because many students come to me from schools where the bass is taught by a cellist. I don't make a big deal about the differences between the two styles, and I sometimes recommend that the student study both bows at the same time. As far as I am concerned, they are equal."

"How do you warm up before a solo concert or before a long session of practice?"

"I have a special warm-up routine that takes an hour and ten minutes. It begins with long bows and slow vibrato exercises, plus 24 major and minor three-octave scales, doublestops, shifting throughout all reaches of the fingerboard, spiccato, sautillé, etc. I progress from slow speeds to the most rapid inter-hand coordination." Then Green smiled archly and added, "if you will permit me a bit of self-publicity, I would like to recommend to any interested readers or students, my 'Advanced Techniques of Double Bass Playing, Parts 1 and 2."

We saw nothing wrong in that, and having seen the weighty volume, we can testify that it investigates just about every aspect of bass technique and background. We asked for his opinions on competitions.

"Bass competitions are only now becoming an important phase of bass development, although there are currently not any

BASS EVOLUTION: Left to right are James Exum, Jane Wagner, Worth Gardner and Barry Green.

really major ones in the United States. However, there are a growing number of big international competitions in Europe which either include bass or are exclusively for bass. The competition syndrome has not yet affected American bass life, but Americans are now beginning to compete in these European events. In general, I feel that bass competitions are a healthy influence in bass development, which is growing by leaps and bounds. In the past 10 years or so, bass playing has made extraordinary strides."

"Do you not feel that bass contests also have some negative features?"

"Yes. I am particularly concerned about the repertoire selected for some of these contests. They use too much of what I consider to

be second-rate music, for instance, the Dragonetti-Nanny Concerto, weak routine transcriptions, or contemporary concoctions that patently exploit the sensational and gauche. I do, however, welcome the appearance of skillfully crafted new concertos at these competitions."

We asked about his instruments and learned that he has a beautiful Storioni for solo work, a Joseph Gagliano for the orchestra, and uses contemporary bows made by Rubino and Hannings, a husband-wife team of bassist-bowmakers in Pownal, Maine. Green considers these the most playable bows he has ever used. We asked about solo bass playing as opposed to orchestral playing in terms of musical and instrumental approach.

"I would say that apart from the specific psychological factors involved in solo playing as differentiated from orchestral 'team' playing, the main disparity is instrumental rather than musical. Each exploits its own range, but solo playing particularly stresses the use of high positions and a six or seven octave fingerboard mastery not required for orchestral playing. The demands for chamber music performance fall somewhere in between the two."

"Are there any bassists who earn at least a respectable portion of their livelihood from solo playing?"

"Possibly Karr, Turetzky, Streicher and François Rabbath, and there are another dozen or so of us who play solo engagements but do not consider it the source of our basic livelihood. Then there are jazz solo stars such as Eddie Gomez, Dave Holland and Ron Carter. But who knows what tomorrow will bring. The bass is now attracting top musical talents, and the future is unlimited."

"What is your opinion of bass playing in the USSR as compared to the West?"

"I feel they have been at a disadvantage because of lack of contact with progress made in the West. At this point they still tend to look backwards and are a good 30 years behind us, especially in bass literature developments."

We asked what Green thought about the five-string bass.

"A player must be large in physique to play the five-string bass, and the instrument itself is extra bulky. They are used exclusively by the bass section of the Berlin Philharmonic, and are frequently used by players in other major European orchestras. I admit that they offer a certain advantage in flexibility of the low

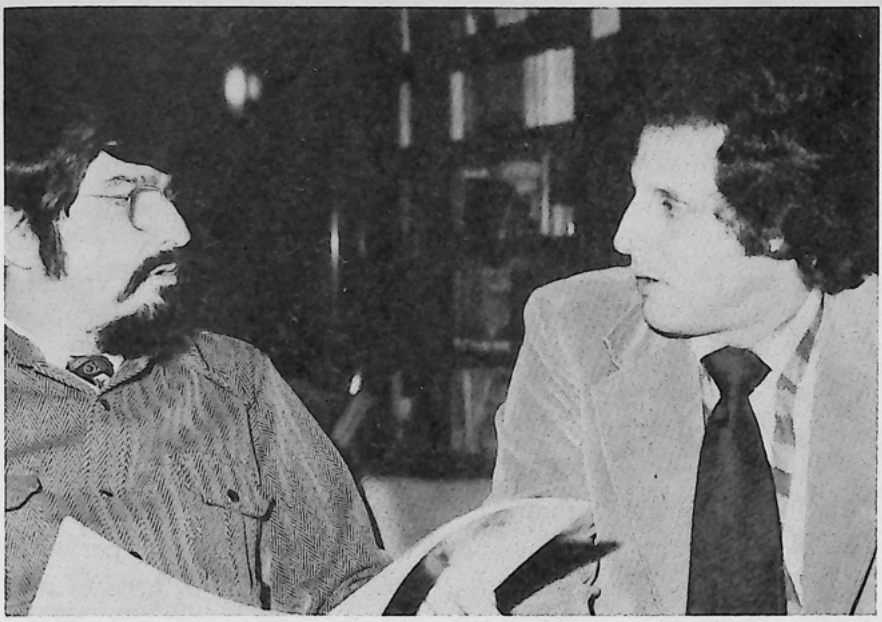
Paul Paradise, violist, comparing his hands with the fingers of Barry Green.

"C" string, but the arch on the bridge requires that the strings be too close together for my liking. My preference is the four-string bass with the extension bar for both solo and orchestral playing, even though the extensions are sometimes clumsy and noisy. But in any case, I don't think usage of the five-string bass is increasing."

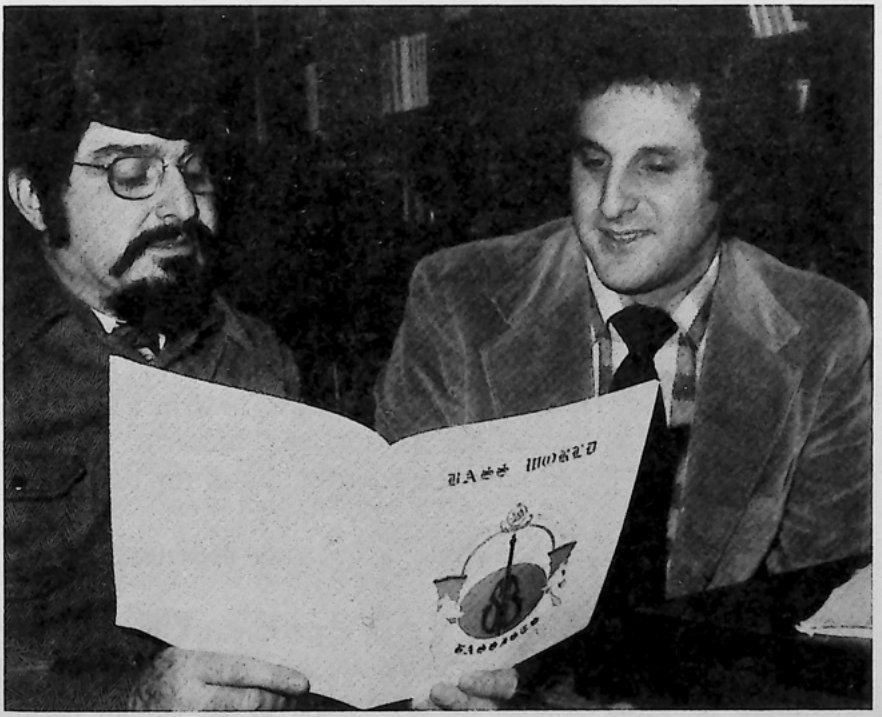
We asked what might be construed as a sensitive question.

"How do you compare the relative perfection of your recordings, which we have heard, with your 'live' performance?"

Green was not at all fazed. "I have no objection," he said "to anyone making a comparison between my recorded and 'live' performances. It's true that an occasional 'live' note could use 'editing' as compared to an edited performance. But I greatly prefer the 'live' performance with all its minor imperfections



Paul Paradise with Barry Green discussing the BASS WORLD MAGAZINE, an annual journal issued by the International Society of Bassists.



because it has a quality of projection a recording can never quite duplicate, along with an extra emotional and spiritual dimension. And don't forget that audience involvement and communication are also superior in a 'live' performance. The difference is like attending an exciting football game in a packed stadium as opposed to watching it on T.V., alone in your bedroom. I prefer attending the game."

Green is an inveterate champion and performer of contemporary music. We asked what he demanded of such compositions.

"First of all," he said, "let us remember that there is a dearth of good compositions from the Romantic period up to about 1920, written exclusively for the bass. And bass technique has advanced so tremendously in recent years, there is a great vacuum waiting to be filled. Of course, that does not mean that all contemporary works are worthy. This has never been the case in any period of musical history. But bass players today are badly in need of new works. In selecting works for my own performance, I avoid those that are sensationalistic merely for the sake of sensationalism. However, I do believe strongly in the element of what is often referred to as 'showmanship.' I feel that a bass performance should be a rememberable experience for the audience, totally appealing, entertaining, and, if you will, understandable. The music must stand on its own merits, and require little, or better yet, no 'explanation'!"

You have commissioned new works for your programs. Are you planning any more such commissions?"

"Yes. I am in the process of organizing a group of about 30 bassists from around the world under the auspices of the International Society of Bassists, in a joint venture to which we will all contribute money. The object is to commission Alberto Ginastera, through the Boosey-Hawke's publishing house, to write a bass concerto in the general vein of his exciting harp concerto. I believe such a work could be an immense contribution to the bass repertoire."

"Would you tell us something about your experimental programs?"

"At this point they are more than experimental, inasmuch as they have had considerable audience success and acclaim. In collaboration with the head of the University of Cincinnati Music

Theater Department, writer, director, composer, accompanist Worth Gardner, I have been striving to expand the media for bass by creating a new type of bass showcase. We have written a 45-minute production called 'Bass Evolution', based on the stated premise, 'The world is a better place for the bass today than it has ever been'. In brief, it is a narrative history of the bass, featuring solo bass, two dancers, string quartet, piano, and a ghost voice. We utilize music from Corelli and Bach to Dittersdorf, Bottesini and Saint-Saëns, up to music of the modern era. And I use improvisations wherever I think it will be effective. The show also contains comedy relief, but its essential elements are educational as well as entertaining."

We admired Green's ingenuity in popularizing his chosen instrument. "Do you think such a production has a potential for the future?" we asked.

"I do. And I look forward to many more group and solo tours throughout the USA and Europe, perhaps even National Television. It is my ambition to do less symphony work, and devote my time to concerts, teaching and organizational projects."

After getting to know Green and seeing the vigor and self-discipline of the man, it was not difficult to believe that he had an excellent chance to achieve his goals.

At this point in our discussion we slanted our questions once again to matters pertaining to bass technique. "Please give us some of your ideas on bass sound production."

"Three main factors affect the sound of a note: bow speed, weight as applied to the bow from the arm, as transferred through the hand, and the distance of the bow from the bridge. A bassist should treat the area between bridge and fingerboard as an artist treats his palette of colors. When the bow is very close to the bridge, especially in slow speeds, it will produce a heavy, relatively clear, intense sound. When it is stroked further from the bridge near the edge of the fingerboard, the sound will tend to be light and fuzzy. As the pitch of the notes is raised, it is vital that the bow move closer to the bridge or the quality of tone will become thin and lose intensity. Bow speed affects the quality of sound in that it will be clearer with a slower bow stroke, and less defined, more hazy with a faster stroke. Finally, arm weight greatly affects dynamics—the less weight applied, the softer the sound."

Co-author Henry Roth discussing Barry Green's book on bass playing with Green.

"What about string crossings?"

"There are two movements involved in string crossings: the vertical motion of the arm and the tilting of the wrist. The first serves to prepare the direction of the string crossing; the second is more natural with the French bow because the hand and fingers are already positioned in the direction of the tilt. It is important that the student realize in string crossings, a small section of the bowhair is not used when the bow moves vertically from string to string."

"Do you have any advice on shifting?"

"Shifting is accomplished by moving the forearm and keeping the wrist and fingers in place. The thumb should be completely relaxed so that the weight of the arm is holding the string down on the fingerboard. In the thumb position, over the body of the bass, the arm weight should be distributed through the arch between the thumb and whichever finger is being used. If it is the third finger, the first two do not have to remain on the string during a sustained note, as this could upset the arch supporting the arm weight. Occasionally, in fortissimo passages, the left thumb may aid in pressing down the strings in the lower positions. But one must be very careful that thumb pressing does not become a substitute for arm weight."

"In your opinion, at what point should a student take up study of the vibrato, and what are some of the things this entails?"

"I feel the study of the vibrato should not begin before the student has acquired an understanding and command of the positions, shifting, and the bow arm. Naturally, like all phases of bass technique that we are discussing here, the subject of vibrato is too in-

An episode in a Michael Levinson theatre piece, staged by Worth Gardner, in which "Bassist-Astronaut" Barry Green makes a moon landing.

volved for any complete analysis. Let me just say that in vibrato, which is basically the alternate sharpening and flattening of pitch, the speed of oscillation will vary considerably, depending on musical factors and register. In general, the lower the pitch, the slower the vibrato. Vibrato can be thought of as a miniature form of shifting, but in this case the finger must remain in one place while the forearm moves. This can be practiced by shifting back and forth over a quarter of tone, then gradually placing one finger down solidly on the string. The arm will continue the shifting motion which has now become a vibrato. All parts of the hand and wrist should remain as relaxed as possible while vibrating. When vibrating with the first finger, the other fingers should be relaxed above the string. When vibrating on the second finger, the first may or may not be kept on the string. And when vibrating with the fourth finger, it is usually helpful to move the thumb a little closer to that finger and lift the first, second, and sometimes third fingers above the strings, so they do not restrict the vibrations. Essentially, the vibrato motion must be controlled by the forearm, with the wrist, fingers, and forearm moving as one unit."

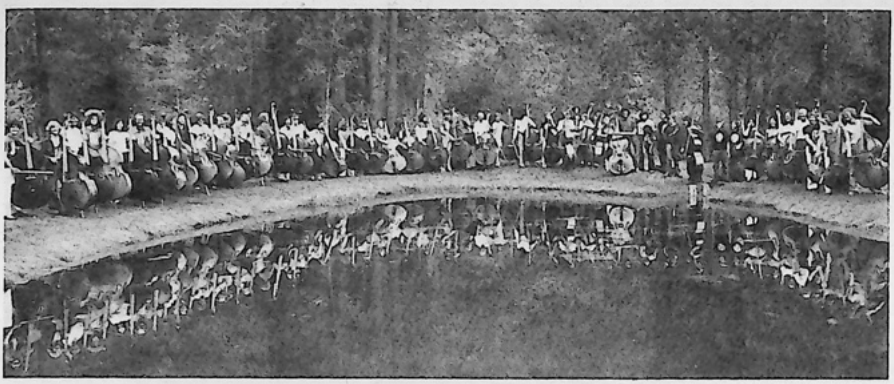
"How do you approach the question of proper practicing?"

"There is no single item more important in attaining instrumental mastery than the matter of learning to practice in an analytical way. Most music students can decrease practice time by one-half if they can learn to utilize their practice time efficiently, and also make the process easier and more meaningful. He might ask himself some of these questions: How should I divide my practice time? Is it necessary to work on scales for a whole hour in order to get warmed up? When learning a new piece should I ignore dynamics and bowings at the beginning stage?

"The student must understand that a piece of music should be thoroughly analyzed before the instrument is even touched. If a player is having a technical problem, it makes little sense to continue practicing an incorrect procedure. This merely compounds the problem. When in doubt, practice slowly. A metronome can be invaluable for working a passage up to tempo. A student must learn to take pride in his playing and immediately reject any playing that does not sound good.

"Further, he should ask himself—is there variety, color and life in his sound projection? Do his fingerings and bowings fit the

Barry Green proudly poses with his family. Jane Wagner Green was formerly the Principal Ballerina with the Cincinnati Ballet. They have a boy, Zachary, who is 3½ years old in this photo and another boy, Adam, only 9 months old. Where is "Dammit" their Siamese cat?



Above: Aspen Music Festival featured 75 bassists. It was organized by Green. Below: Green visits with members of the bass section of the Israeli Orchestra.

Green 'coaching' his pupil Paul Harris, Jr. (now with the N.Y. Philharmonic) and harpist Lisa Wellbaum in the Rachmaninoff **Vocalise** *which was played at Barry Green's wedding in 1971 at Cincinnati's Music Hall Foyer.*

natural phrasing of the passage? Is each note perfectly in tune? All practicing must be done with a purpose. An excellent check is to practice with a tape recorder. This will help to differentiate what a player thinks he hears in his own often self-prejudiced mind with what is actually coming out of the instrument.

"The learning process is an extraordinary phenomenon. In teaching the hands physical memory, it is generally better to have several practice periods daily. Practicing one passage correctly six times a day is far superior to practicing three hours straight and battering the hands unmercifully. And the question of relaxation is of critical importance. Every muscle in the body except those essential to playing should be in a state of relaxation. All too often students and professionals alike hold their breath while playing. Shoulders and back are tense. In short, I would say that the student who has had the opportunity to study with a teacher who has inculcated him with good practice habits from the start of his training, has a tremendous, perhaps insurmountable advantage, over a student who must unlearn bad habits and correct basic technical flaws in later years."

We asked the bassist to recount a humorous or disconcerting incident in his career; with a bit of urging, he complied.

"My most embarrassing, and I suppose humorous experience, occurred while I was playing in the pit during a performance of Menotti's 'Unicorn', conducted by Thomas Schippers. It so happened that my wife was dancing onstage. I yielded to temptation, looked up to watch her and forgot to make my next entrance. Schippers tried in every way to get my attention, but it was no use. Fascinated by my wife's dancing, I was hopelessly lost. People still twit me about it. But at least it's a story with a moral. Fellow musicians, when you're making music, keep one eye on the conductor and the other on the music, and don't permit yourself to be distracted by anything, not even a talented wife!" We all laughed heartily.

"In teaching the hands physical memory, it is generally better to have several practice periods daily. Practicing one passage correctly six times a day is far superior to practicing three hours straight and battering the hands unmercifully.

Barry Green with Esther Roth in front of the Roth's home in Los Angeles.

Green had consented to select and briefly discuss a major bass opus, and supply us with a copy of the music, complete with his bowings and fingerings. He chose the Sonata of J.A. Birkenstock (1687-1733), the work of four movements composed early in the 18th century.

"This is one of my favorite Baroque works for bass, and I have it scheduled for a forthcoming Carnegie Hall concert. It is similar in style to the familiar Eccles Sonata, but is less known, perhaps a bit more difficult and challenging, and better suited to the instrument.

"I prefer to start a Baroque sonata, which generally opens a recital, with forte sonority, regardless of the edition marking. I take a deep breath before I play, and probably exhale on the upbeat, if there is one. My fingerings and bowings in the Birkenstock have been carefully considered, and hopefully some of them will be of help to readers who are bass students."

"In Baroque performance, one of the biggest bones of contention concerns the matter of ornamentations. What is your approach to this?"

"A good question, and one which will probably provoke sharp differences of opinion among performers and musicologists as long as Baroque music is played. My approach is simply this: first the

Ruggieri Ricci and Barry Green performing together in rehearsal.

player should become steeped in the general Baroque style—really become conversant with the inner pulse of that era through listening to much Baroque music played by diverse artists, and gain acquaintance with the literature, art and overall cultural history and traditions of Baroque times.

"He should then be able, after trial and error experimentations, to devise his own ornamentations according to his personal tastes, but always remembering, of course, never to transgress the endemic Baroque spirit. I feel that usually, more ornamentation can be utilized than is indicated in the printed music. The tasteful usage and sophisticated variance of trills, mordents, appoggiaturas and leaning tones can do wonders in adding charm and elegance to a Baroque work. And I prefer harpsichord collaboration whenever this is possible. Another thing—the performer should try never to play any repetition in exactly the same way as its predecessor."

We realized we had strayed somewhat from the specifics of the Birkenstock, and asked Green to continue a bit on that subject.

"Just a few points. I suggest that any note to be embellished which can be divided by three, be ornamented two-thirds of its

value. If it is divisible by two, the embellishment should be for half of the note. Also, all crescendo build-ups should be very gradual, and all pianos should be bowed near the fingerboards. And, oh yes, at bar 17, where there is a big octave leap from the preceding note, hit the high note harmonic, first, and then immediately press the finger down solidly and begin to vibrate.

"What about the second movement which is marked Allegro?"

"I like to think of it as an Andante, and as you can see, I lower the metronomic beat. In practice, I play doublestops wherever possible, to check and solidify my intonation, and broaden my bowing in the cadences.

"The third movement, I think, is the most beautiful of the sonata. You will note at letter K, I play with a full, resonant sound, but no ornamentation. Then, in the repetition, I play piano and add the ornamentation. As for the final movement, this must be practiced slowly and precisely to develop purity of intonation and speed. All changes of dynamics should be emphasized as much as possible."

At this juncture, we bade the dynamic, creative bassist goodbye, and look forward to his continued achievements in behalf of the traditionally over-neglected double bass.

Some of the members of the International Society of Bassists are, from left to right: Barry Green, Homer Mensch, Federico Silva, Manuel Verdeguer, Milton Kastenbaum and David Walter. Rostropovich is at center.

SONATE

J.A. BIRKENSTOCK

(1657-1733)

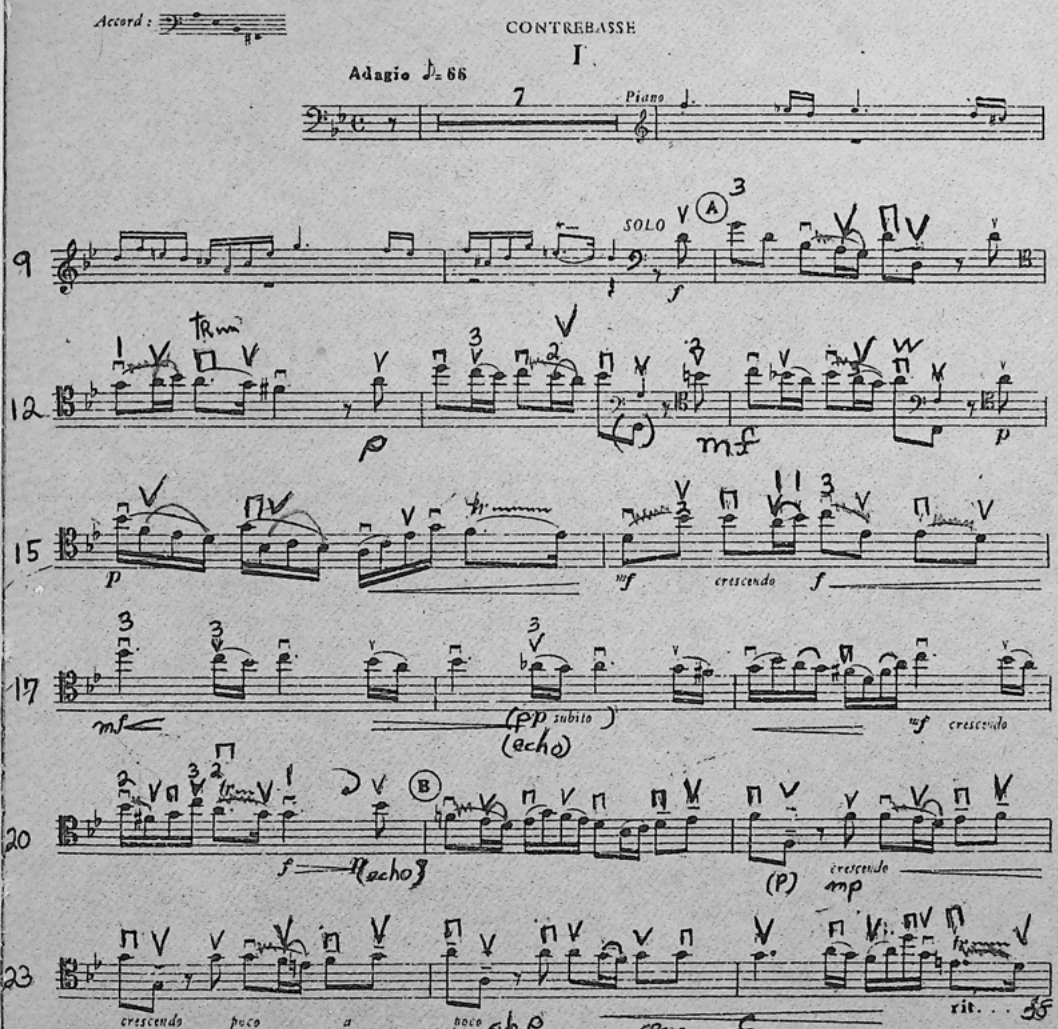
RÉALISATION POUR PIANO
DE EUGÈNE RIGOT

J.DELMAS-BOUSSAGOL
LES CLASSIQUES DE LA CONTREBASSE
N° 15

Accord :

CONTREBASSE

I.



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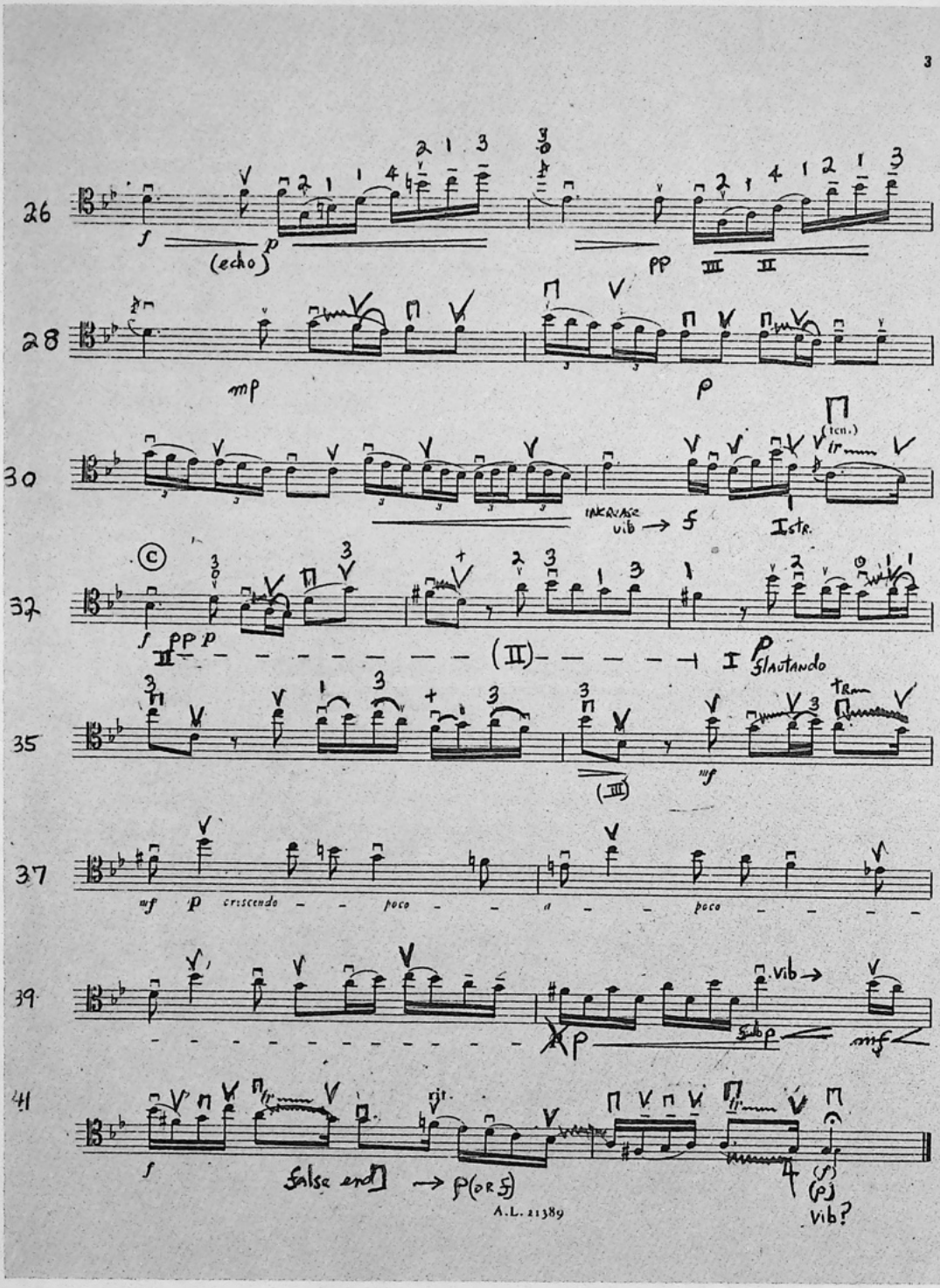
26
(echo)
28
mp
30
tr
INCREASE vib →
Istr.
32
(II)
I
Slentando
35
(III)
mf
37
mf p crescendo poco poco
39
vib →
sub p
mf
41
false end → p (or 5)
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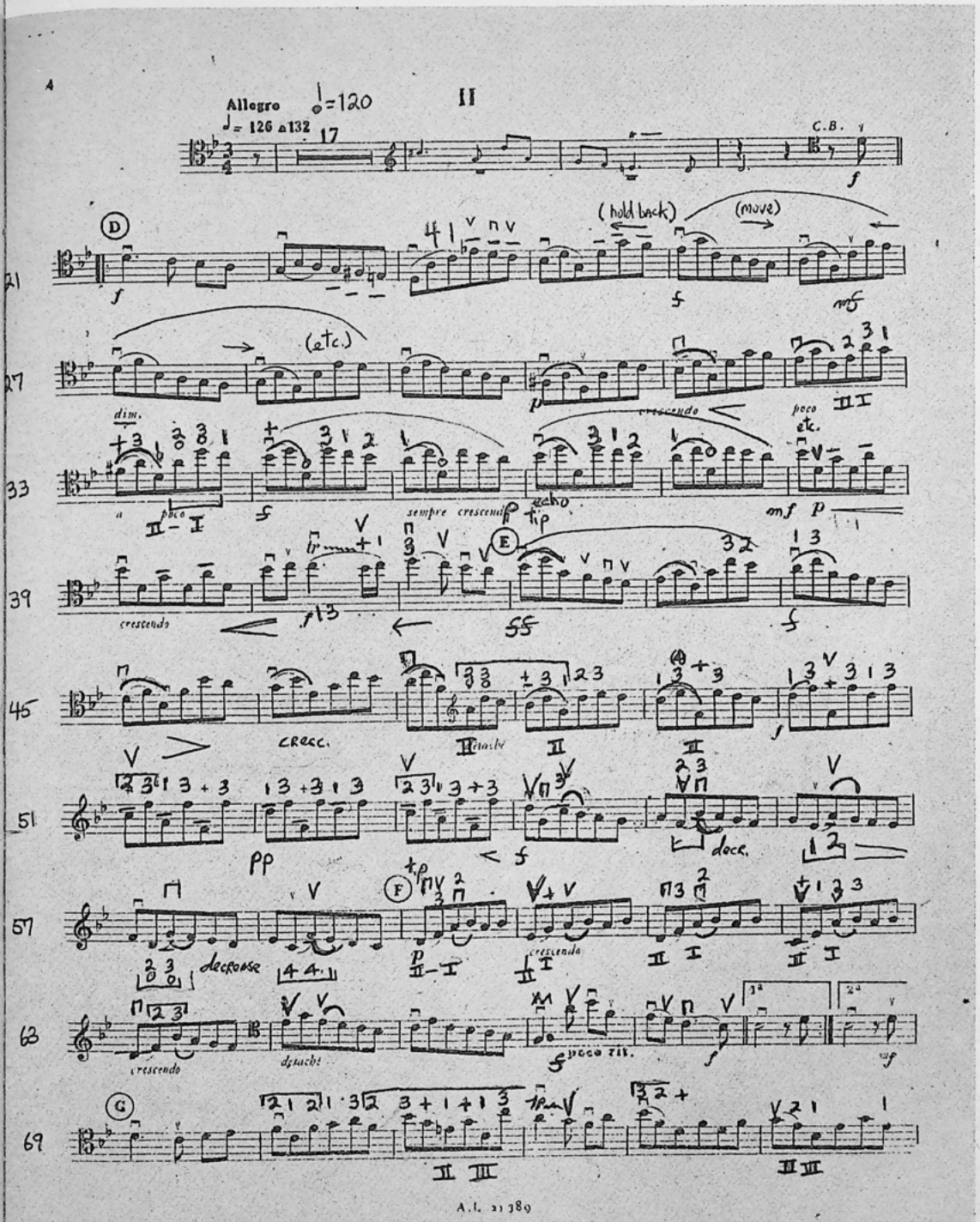
(p)
vib?


Allegro
♩= 126 a 132
♩=120
II
17
C.B.
(hold back)
(move)
(etc.)
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sempre crescendo
echo
crescendo
cresc.
decrease
cresc.
dim.
poco rit.
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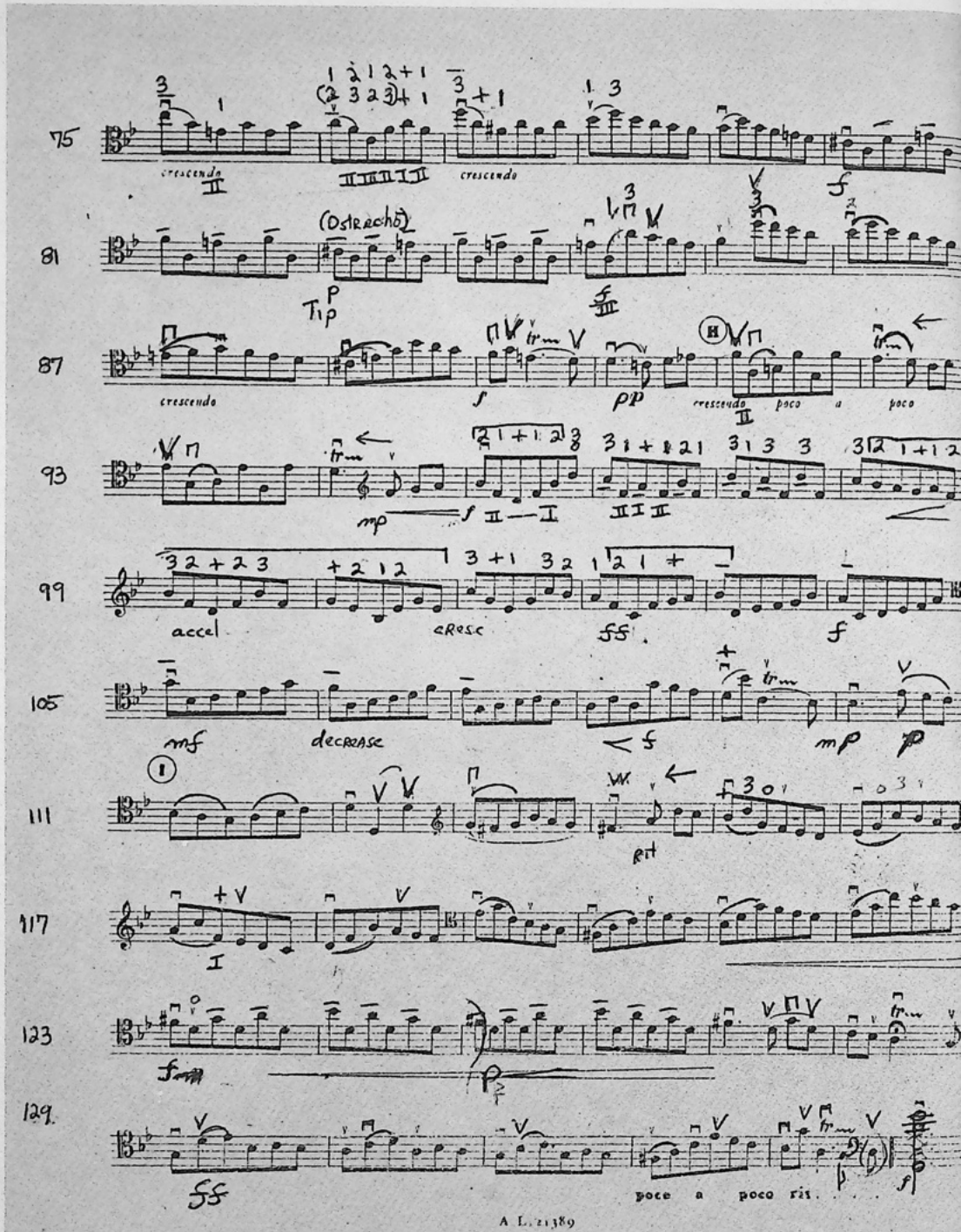
75
crescendo
crescendo
81
(Ostrecho)
Tip
87
crescendo
f
pp
crescendo poco a poco
93
mp
f
99
accel
cresc
ff
f
105
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decrease
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111
117
I
123
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129
ff
poco a poco rit.
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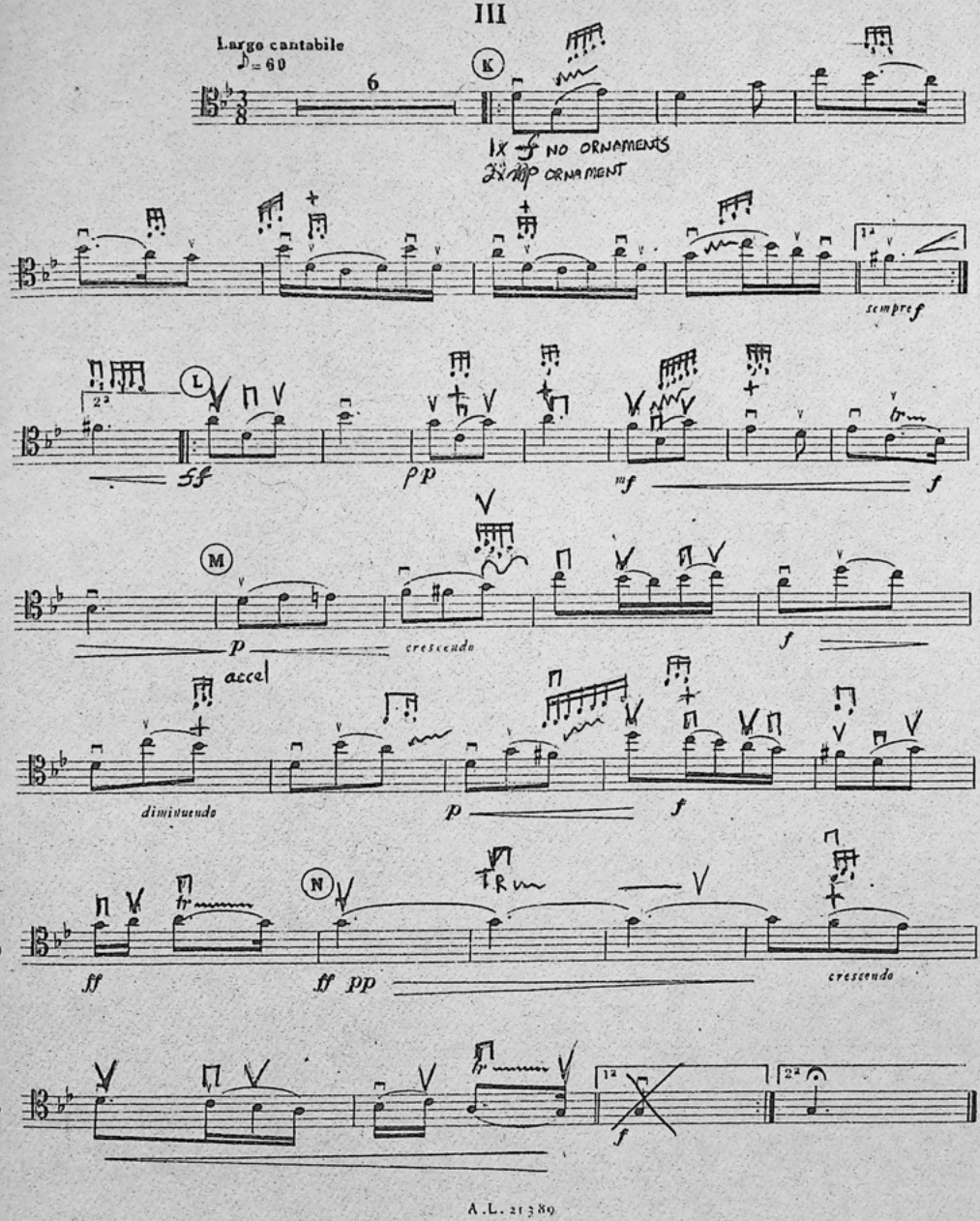
III
Largo cantabile
♪ = 60
6
K
1x f NO ORNAMENTS
2x mp ORNAMENT
sempre f
L
ff
pp
mf
f
M
p
crescendo
f
accel
diminuendo
p
f
N
ff
ff pp
crescendo
f

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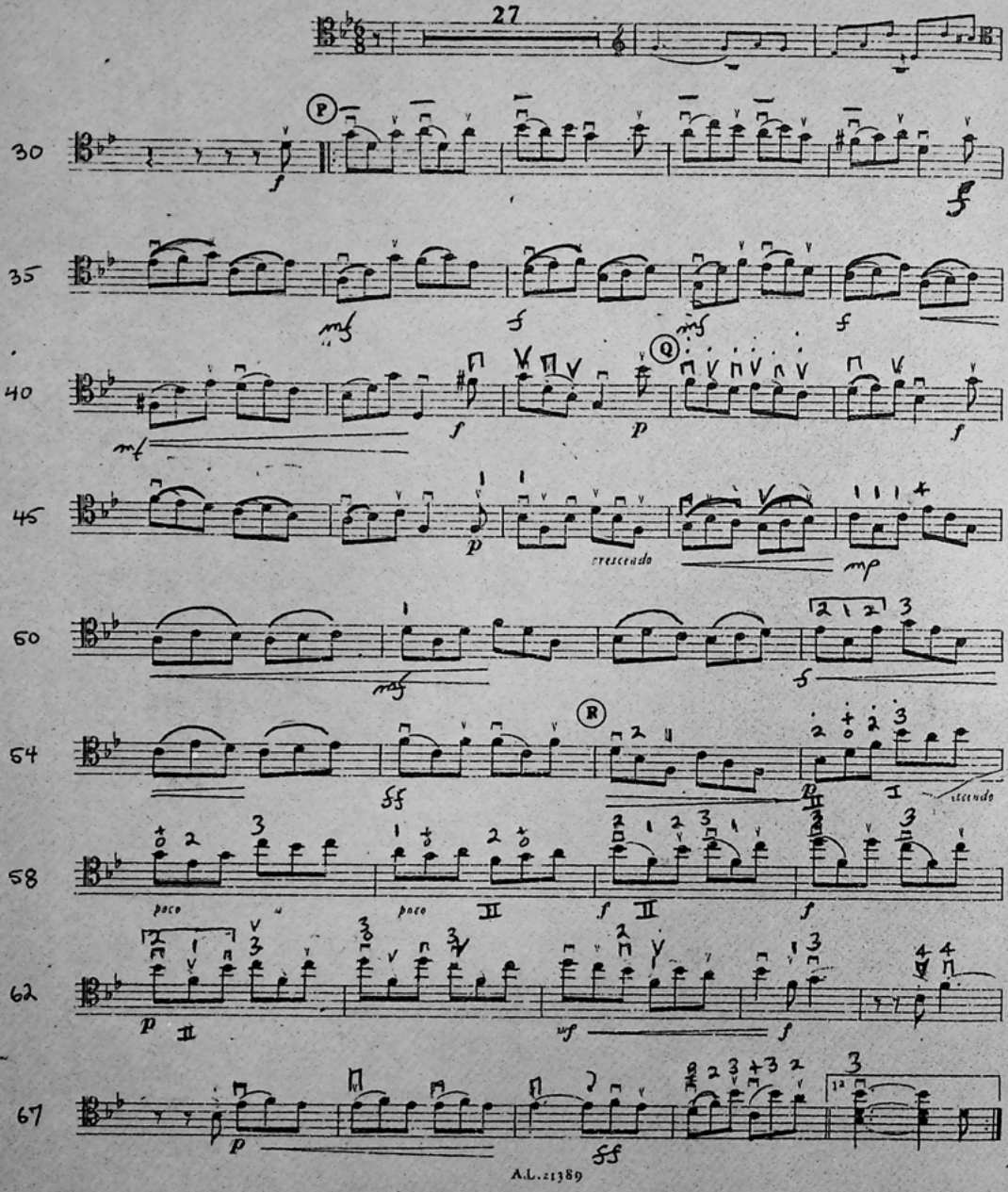
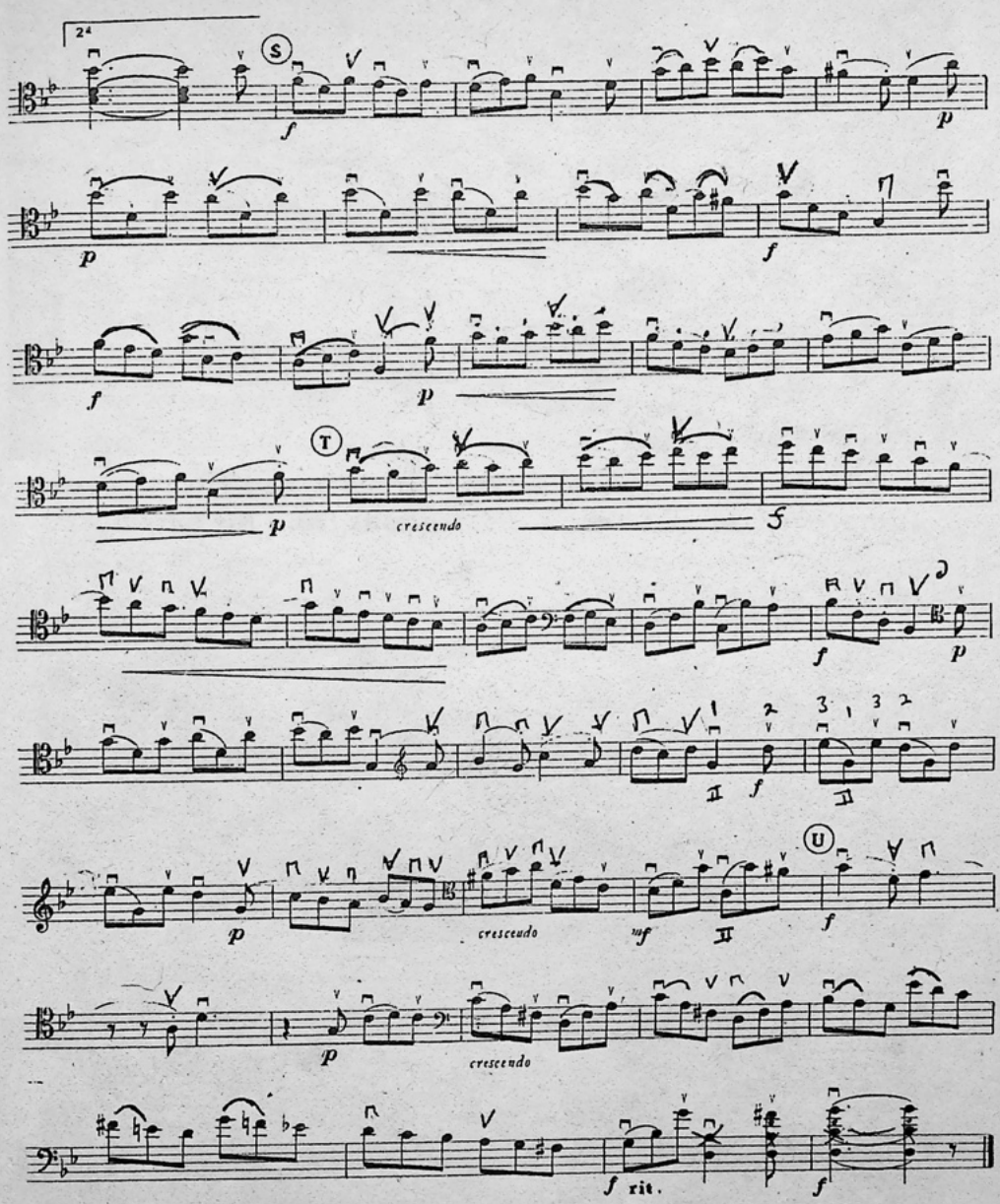
IV

Allegro con spirito ♩=112 or 𝅗𝅥.=144




2d
S
72
f
p
77
p
f
81
f
p
T
86
p
crescendo
f
90
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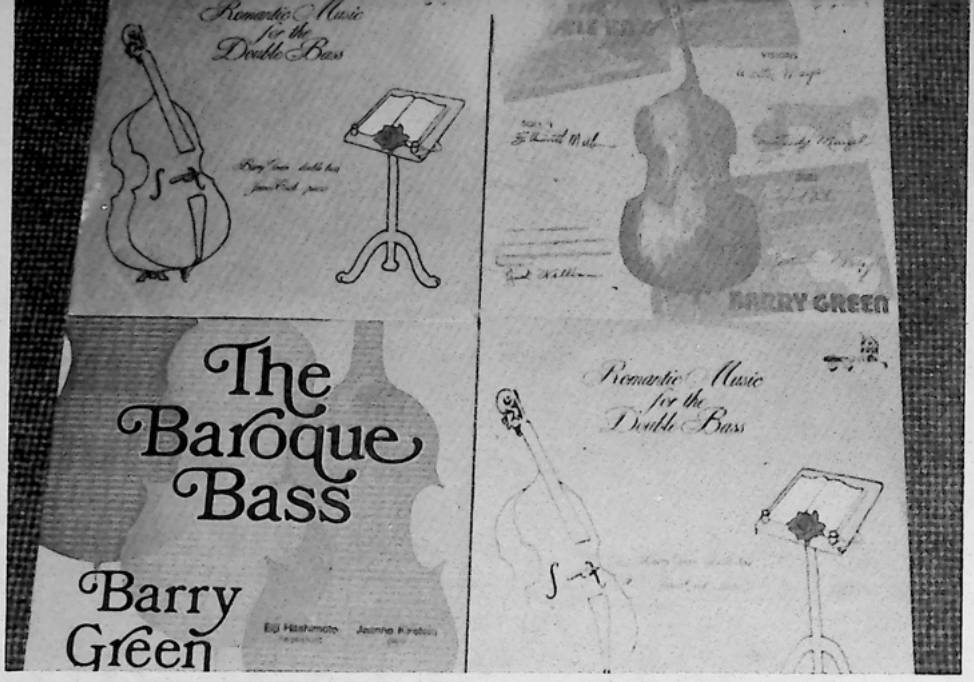
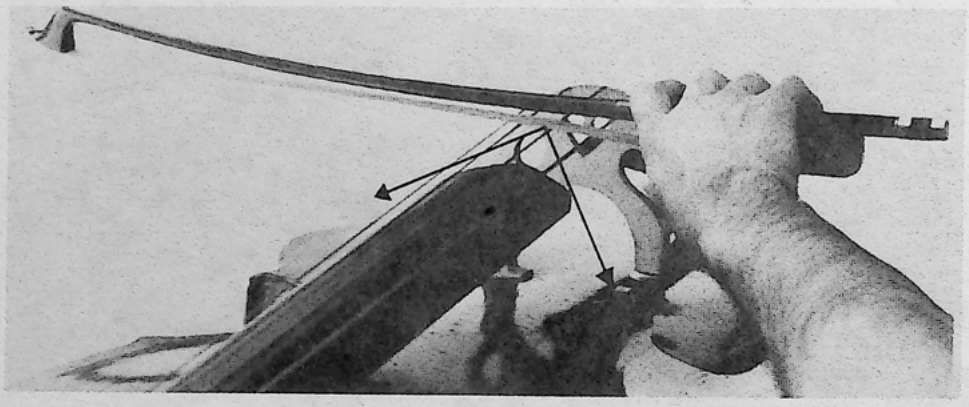
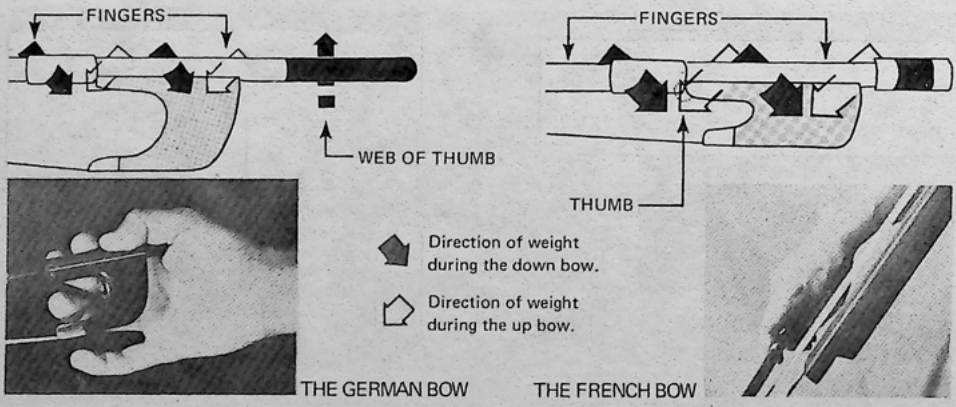


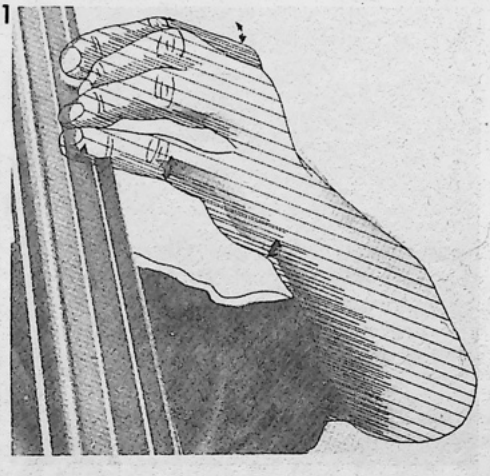
Above: A sampling of Barry Green's records. Below: Samples of Barry Green's illustrations from his bass book.





Examples of vibrato from Green's book: 1. Vibrato with 2nd finger. 2. Vibrato with fourth finger. 3. First finger vibrato. 4. Thumb vibrato. 5. Alternate thumb vibrato.

1



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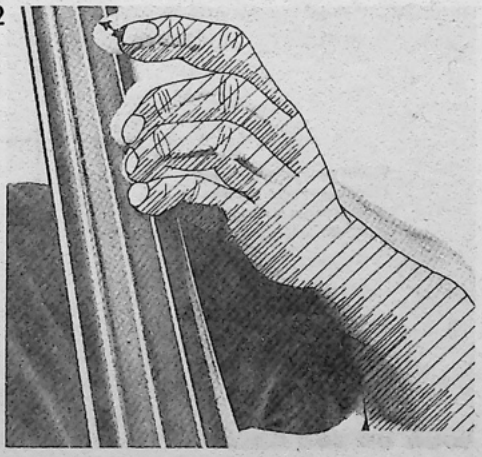

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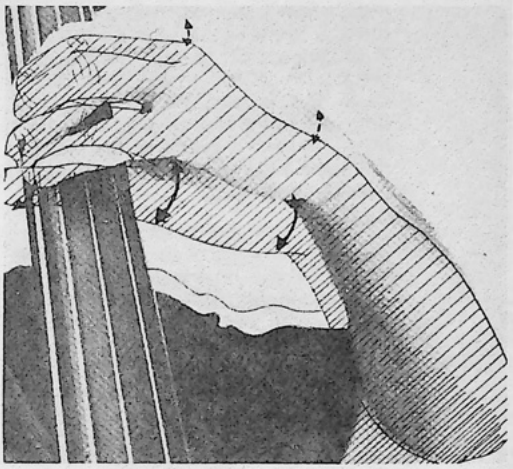

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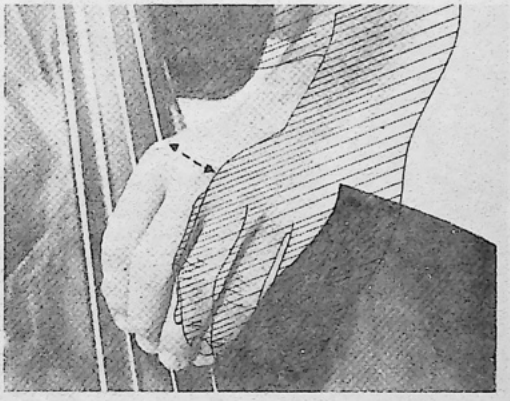

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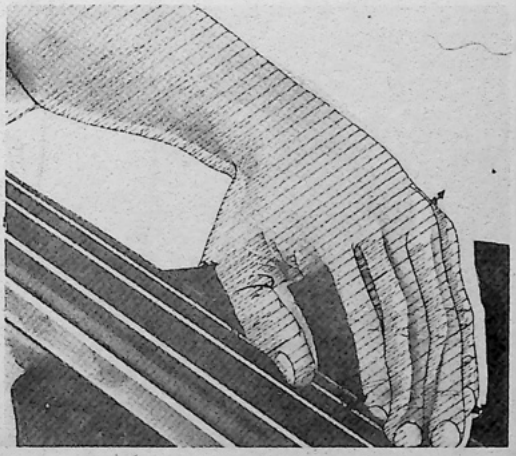
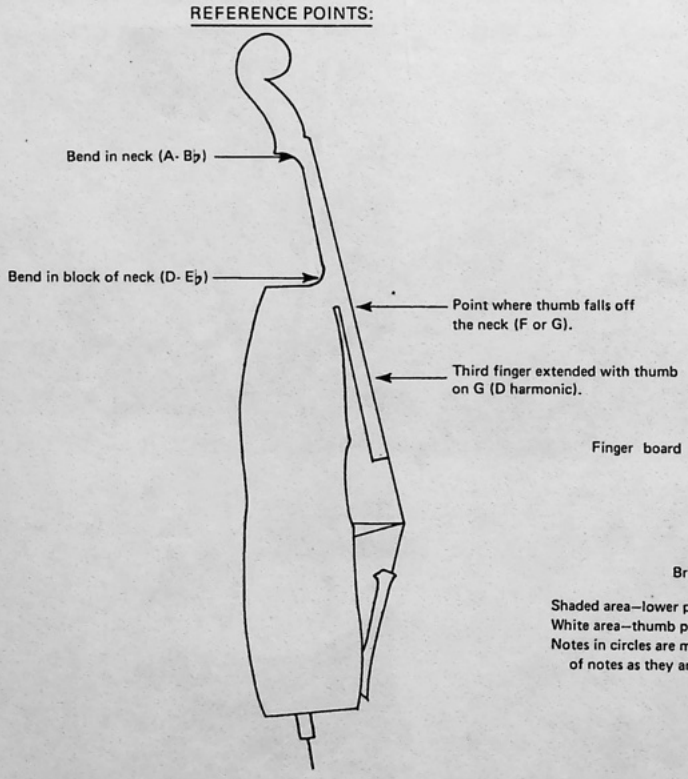
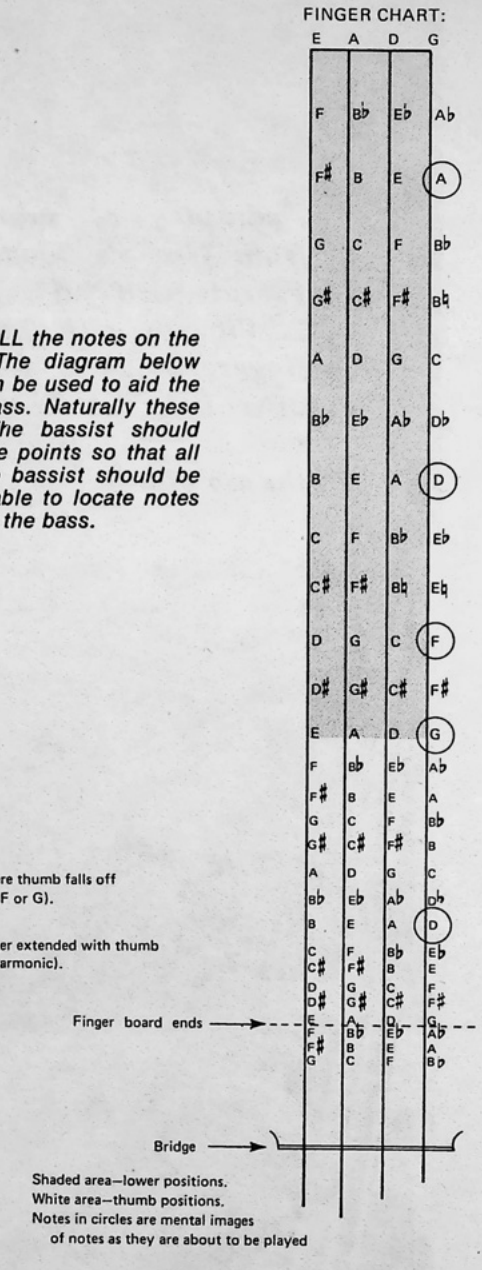


FINGERBOARD

The fingerboard of the bass can be pictured and played very much like the keyboard on the piano. One should notice how a pianist uses the weight from the arm to press the keys on the keyboard. This concept can be applied to the double bass both in the lower positions on the neck and in the thumb positions. The fingers should stay relaxed and flexible so that they move over the fingerboard with the same ease as those of a pianist moving over the keyboard.

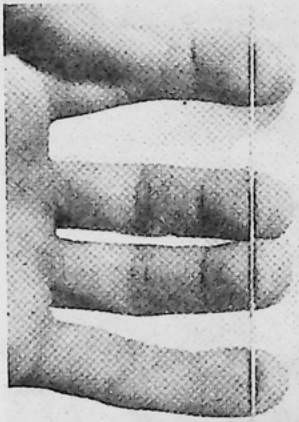
The bassist should visualize the location of ALL the notes on the fingerboard similar to the chart on the right. The diagram below shows several physical "reference points" that can be used to aid the bassist locating notes at different parts of the bass. Naturally these points will vary with different instruments. The bassist should memorize the distances and notes between these points so that all notes can be accounted for. When possible, the bassist should be independent of reference points and should be able to locate notes without referring to one of these physical aids on the bass.


REFERENCE POINTS:
Bend in neck (A- B♭)
Bend in block of neck (D- E♭)
Point where thumb falls off the neck (F or G).
Third finger extended with thumb on G (D harmonic).

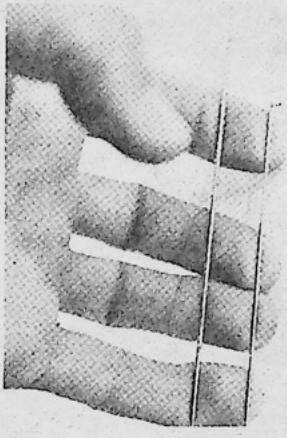

FINGER CHART:
E A D G
Finger board ends
Bridge
Shaded area—lower positions.
White area—thumb positions.
Notes in circles are mental images of notes as they are about to be played

A page from Barry Green's book on the bass.

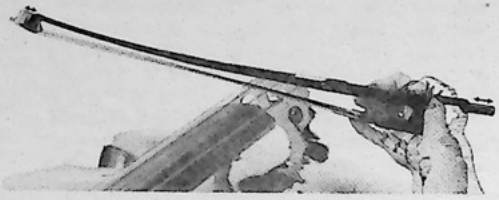
Place where one string would touch fingertips.



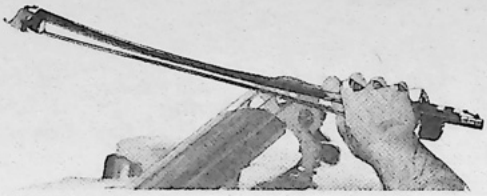
Place where two strings would touch fingertips when using barred fingerings.



When playing in the thumb position, the strings are located even farther apart and bridged fingerings become rather impractical. In this case, it is helpful to consider playing notes that are a fourth apart with two different fingers. This is done by tilting the wrist so that the four fingers of the hand are perpendicular to the strings. In this position the second and third fingers, or the first and second fingers are in an appropriate line to play fourths across the string. In some cases the fourth and third finger could actually be employed on adjacent strings. At times all four fingers could stop all four strings at the interval of a fourth. The thumb can also be employed usually one whole step behind the other fingers.

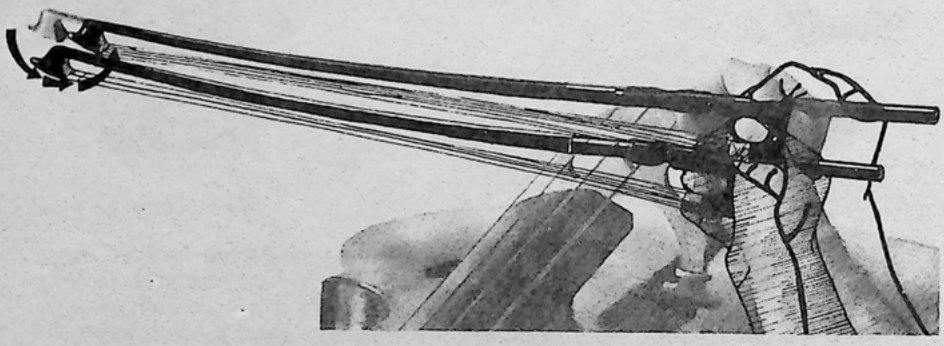


Horizontal movement with the German Bow

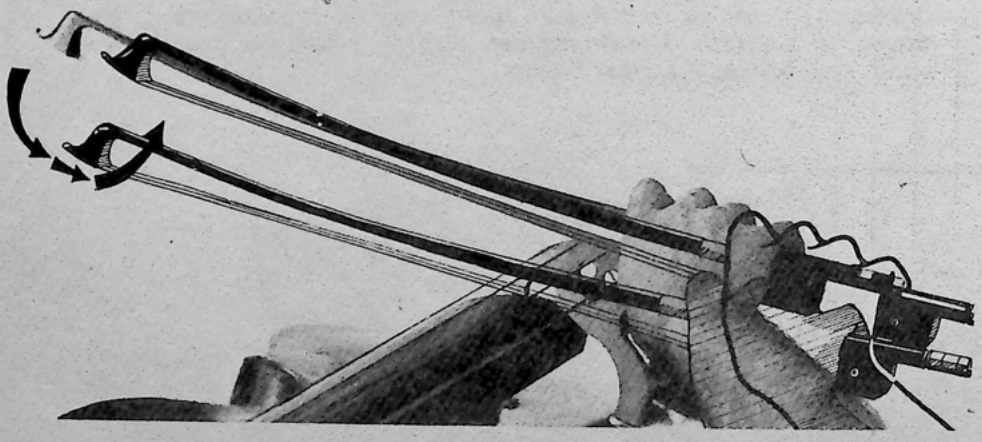


Horizontal movement with the French Bow

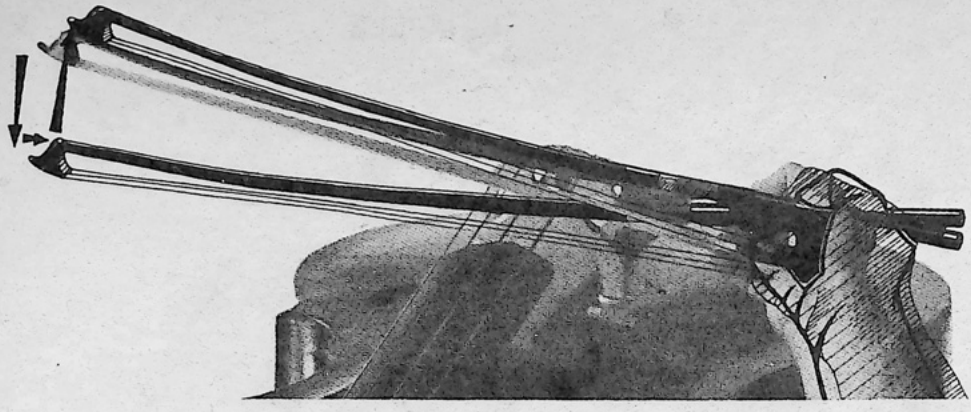
HORIZONTAL SPICCATO(OR ARM SPICCATO):



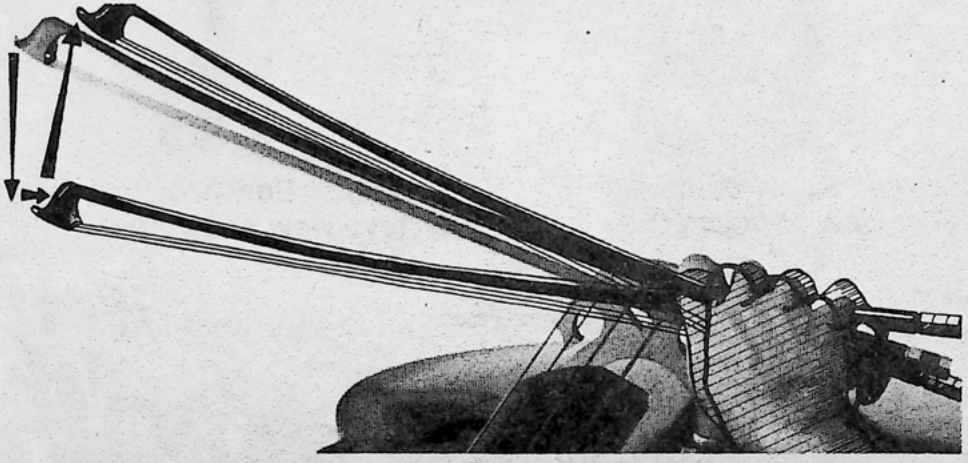
German Bow — Forte (long)



French Bow — Forte

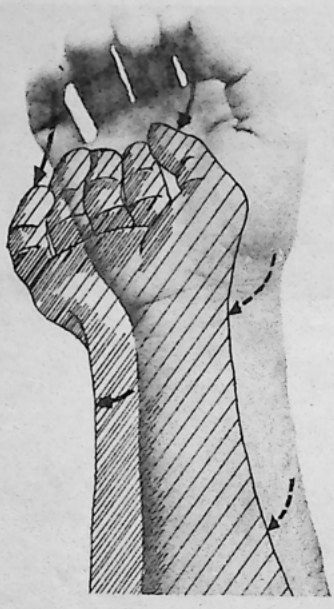


German Bow
Mezzo-piano — (shorter)

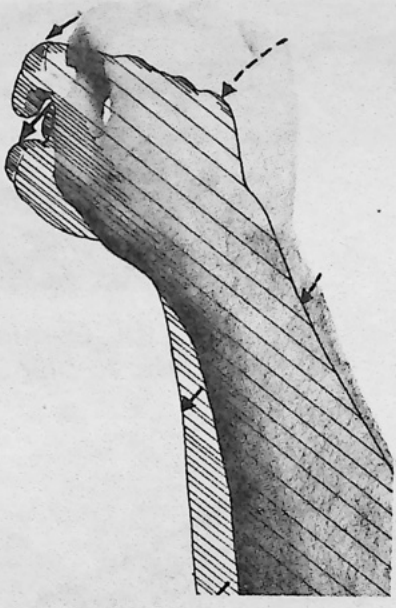


French Bow

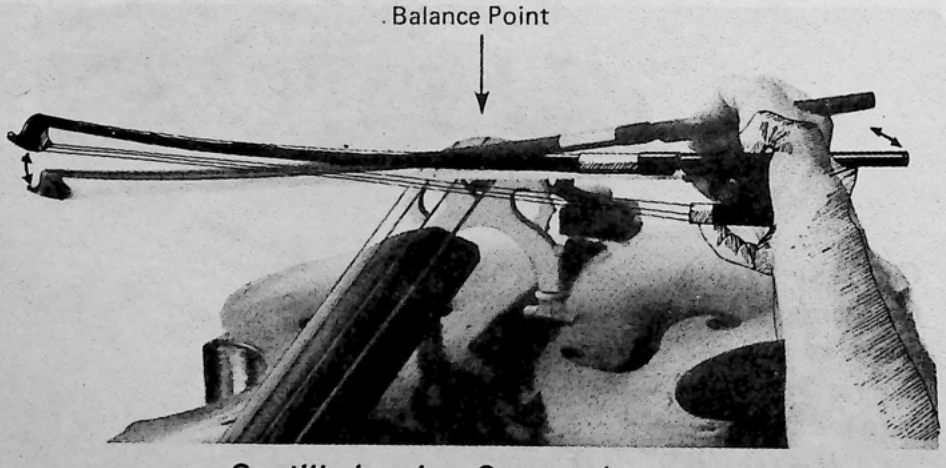
On the facing and following pages are examples taken from Barry Green's excellent book ADVANCED TECHNIQUES OF DOUBLE BASS PLAYING. It was edited by Paul Martin Palumbo and Lucas Drew.



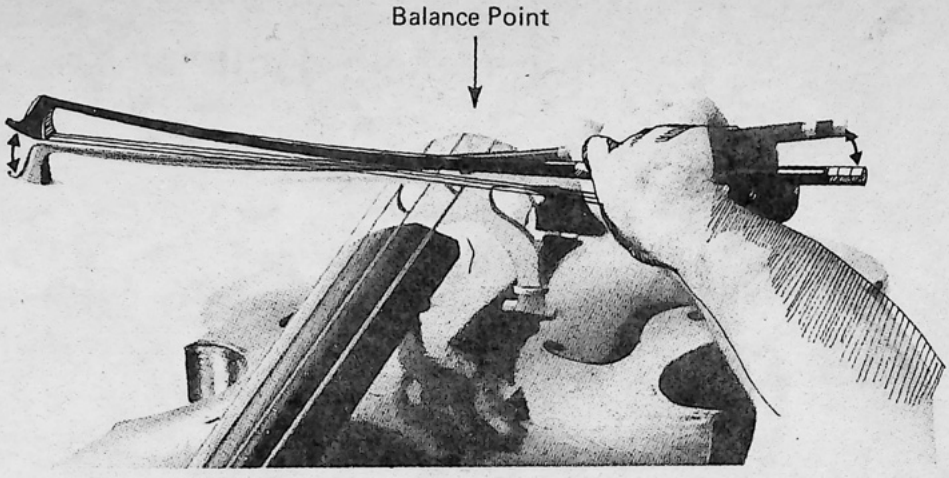
German Bow Position
(eye view of bassist)



French Bow position
(eye view of bassist)



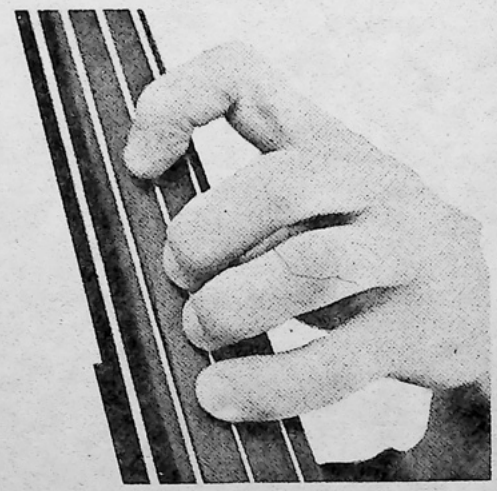
Sautille bowing-German bow.



Sautille bowing-French bow.

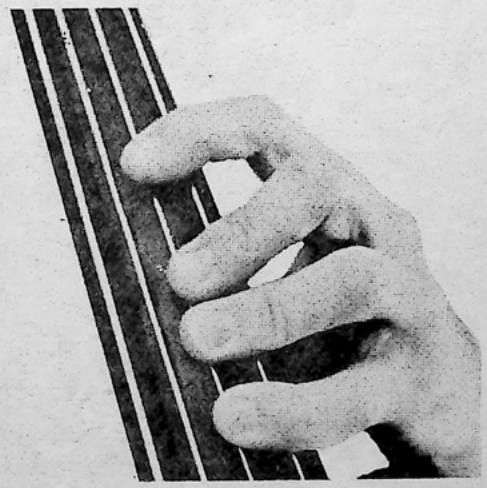
Fingertips in normal position playing notes on the D string.

Photo 1



Barred fingering on the G and D strings simultaneously.

Photo 2



Queen Elizabeth Hall

General Manager: John Denison, C.B.E.

WILFRID VAN WYCK LTD.

present

A Violin Recital

by

FREDELL LACK

ERNEST LUSH pianoforte

Sunday, 27th October 1968 at 7.15 p.m.

PROGRAMME AND NOTES 1/6d.

Fredell Lack

Fredell Lack was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. When she was four years old, her parents began taking her to concerts. At five, she started piano lessons and a year later took up the violin. Her first teacher was Tosca Berger, in Tulsa, a pupil of Ysaye. At age eight, Lack gave her first recital.

When she was 10, the family moved to Houston, Texas, where for two years she studied with Josephine Boudreaux, a pupil of Sevcik and Hubay, who was at that time concert mistress of the Houston Symphony. At age 11 she made her debut as soloist-with-orchestra, playing the Wieniawski Concerto No. 2.

She then went to New York, where she studied with Louis Persinger, himself an Ysaÿe pupil and the teacher of Menuhin and Ricci. Her study with Persinger spanned a nine-year period, during which, at 17, she won a four-year scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music. Later, she studied with Ivan Galamian.

Lack has been a prize recipient in several American competitions and in 1951 received the bronze medallion "Prize of Liége" from Queen Elisabeth of Belgium at the International Violin Competition. Among the orchestras with which she appeared as soloist are those of Pittsburgh, Stockholm, Houston, Rotterdam, San Antonio, Oslo, Kansas City, the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, the Royal Philharmonic, RIAS of Berlin and the BBC Symphony; her conductors include Stokowski, Steinberg, Previn, Schmidt-Isserstedt, Beecham, Barbirolli, Ancerl, Kurtz, Comissiona, Abravenel, Foster and Katims.

In addition to 14 tours of Europe, plus tours in Canada, Central America and Hawaii, Lack starred in her own network radio program and has a roster of recordings including the Mendelssohn Concerto Op. 64 with the New York Philharmonic. She has been concert mistress of the prestigious Little Orchestra Society of New York.

Lack lives in Houston, Texas, is Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at the University of Houston, and first violinist of the Lyric Arts String Quintet. She has been married to Dr. Ralph Eichhorn since 1947; they have two children. Lack plays on the 1727 Baron Duerbrucq Stradivarius.

"Freddy" Lack, as her intimates call her, has been concertizing internationally for several decades. The program cover on the facing page comes from the author's collection of memorabilia.

The past history of women violinists is dotted with instances of gifted women whose careers as concert violinists foundered on the inherent contradiction between a career and a desire for a happy married and domestic life. Fredell Lack is a person who has apparently surmounted the many pitfalls to attain the ideal artist-wife-mother lifestyle—an uncommon achievement indeed! Where so many women have retired from the concert stage after marriage, Lack has continued to develop her career to its fullest potential, with the complete cooperation of her husband and children.

Lack is a tall woman with handsome features dominated by large, dark expressive eyes that bespeak both sensitivity and intelligence. Her manner is serious, yet sustains a sense of personal warmth, and her thinking is disciplined.

We asked her to tell us something of her childhood years.

"My father was a frustrated violinist. Like many immigrants from Russia, he had longed to play the violin all his life. He came from a poor family for whom such things were a luxury. Both he and my mother were determined that I become a musician. When I was five, they discovered I had perfect pitch and started me on the piano."

"What prompted you to switch to the violin?"

"When I was six, Tosca Berger, a pupil of Ysaÿe, came to Tulsa during a concert tour. It was backstage at her concert that I first touched a violin. Berger was a German, at that time only in her 20's, who had been living in New Zealand with her family. My parents suceeded in persuading her to settle in Tulsa. Eventually, her father founded the symphony orchestra in Tulsa and she became its concertmistress. It was the first real music Oklahoma ever had. She taught most of the string players in Oklahoma and has had a profound influence on the cultural life of that state. She was a great inspiration to me and unstinting in her generosity as regards my training. For the first four years of my violin study, I did all my practicing in her home, where she guided my practice every single day. It was she who wound me up and started me in the direction of a concert career. How lucky I was to know Tosca Berger!"

"Why did you leave her?"

"My family moved to Houston when I was 10. I next went to study with Josephine Boudreaux, a pupil of Ševčik and Hubay, for

Fredell Lack with her teacher, Louis Persinger, after Lack's Town Hall, New York debut. She was 21 years old.

two years. She was then the concertmistress of Houston Symphony."

"What did you learn from Boudreaux?"

"Well, first of all she insisted upon really organized scales and double-stop practice. I worked at all the Ševčik studies diligently. She was very demanding in technical matters and would not let a single note pass that was not perfectly accurate.

"My mother then decided that I must play for Louis Persinger, whom she considered the ultimate authority on violin matters. She wanted to find out if a pedagogue of his stature would feel that my talents warranted the sacrifices necessary for a career. At that time, my family was very poor. My mother and I got on a bus and rode three days and three nights to reach New York. I played for him, Piastro and Stassevitch. But it was Mr. Persinger with whom I 'fell in love.' He was the most charming, imaginative, soft-spoken man. He had a fascinating way with young people and skillfully utilized his marvelous sense of humor and imagery in his teaching."

"Did he work with you on technical details?"

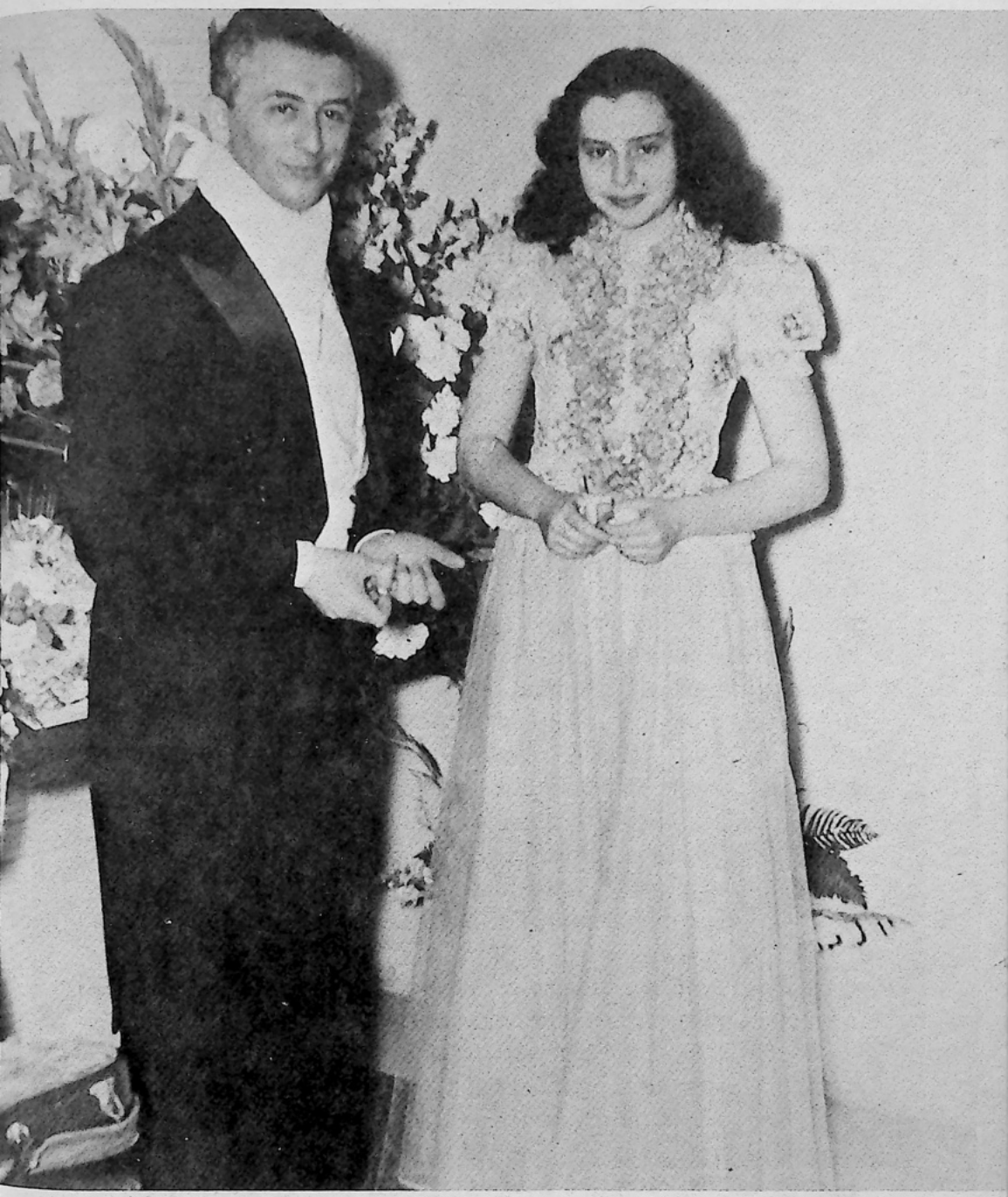
"Yes. We worked on many études, though he was not a severe taskmaster as far as technique was concerned. But he was very demanding about the quality of sound I produced and about usage of vibrato and slides. He coaxed his students to 'play from the heart' and would not tolerate mechanical playing. I was still only 12, but he encouraged complete musical self-expression and personal involvement and scorned perfunctory playing. It was amazing how he could get young people to play with this kind of sensitivity. He dramatized everything with word pictures and stories. Suddenly, notes were no longer just notes."

"Could you give us an example of this?"

"All right. I recall when I was working on the Bach 'Chaconne' he likened it to a colossal chandelier with tier upon tier of radiance blossoming out from the massive central core. It was ever so poetic to me."

"How long did you study with Persinger?"

"About nine years. When I was 17,I won a four-year scholarship to Juilliard and continued my study with him during that period. We went through most of the violin repertoire. I graduated at 21, played a successful Town Hall debut, won a few prizes and made the beginnings of a career."



Fredell Lack was only 17 years old when she made her debut with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. She is shown here with conductor Vladimir Golschmann.

"How long did you practice during your student years?"

"I practiced four to five hours a day from an early age."

"Did you study any contemporary works with Persinger?"

"Several. Prokofiev's concertos and sonatas, Hindemith's sonatas, Stravinsky's Duo Concertantes, Ysaÿe's sonatas and the Walton Concerto. Frequently, I was called upon to play works of various young composers at Juilliard, and Persinger would help me in the preparation."

"Who were some of the other strong influences in your musical life?"

"Nadia Boulanger, for one. When she was at the Longy School in Boston, she would often send out a call for musicians to spend a few days at her place and learn the music of some of the young composers. I gave first performances of sonatas by Harold Shapero and Jacques Lessard, and works by Theodore Chanler.

"I must mention another teacher who had a profound influence on me at the time, the cellist Felix Salmond. Recently I have talked and compared memories with Leonid Hambro, Robert Mann and Dorothy Delay. We all vividly remember in our mind's eye how, during a Brahms Piano Quartet or Beethoven Trio, the towering figure of Salmond standing above us, snapping his fingers, encouraging us to play 'way over our heads.' The genius, the excitement of that man as a teacher! He knew every note of every part, every dynamic. His sense of rhythm, style and timing are memorable. He both terrorized and enthralled us. Sometimes we left the chamber music lesson in tears, but we learned. If I could only give half that inspiration to my students!

"Quite a contrast from Persinger, wasn't he?"

"Totally. Persinger was warm and gentle, and his demands were made with affectionate consideration, whereas Salmond yelled and stormed at you. I'm not sure he even knew our names."

"Didn't this kind of rough treatment break you?"

"It almost did, at the beginning. After the first time I vowed I'd never go back. A few weeks passed and Salmond asked where I was. They told him I was afraid of him. 'Afraid of me!' he expostulated. He promised he'd never raise his voice again, but of course he soon forgot, and began to yell.

"Following Persinger, I wanted very much to study with Galamian. I feel very fortunate to have worked with two of the greatest

Fredell Lack in her dressing room after her triumphant debut.

violin influences of our century. Mr. Galamian made me, for the first time, acutely aware of how I actually did things. Persinger had tolerated all kinds of bow arm and vibrato movements, just as long as one made beautiful sounds and color. Now I began to understand why I did certain things and whether or not they were what I really wanted to do. He taught me much from a technical standpoint and organized things in my mind. A good part of what I am now able to impart to my students I learned from Galamian."

"You believe that it is better to rely on analysis rather than mere musical intuitiveness?"

"Definitely. Mr. Galamian taught me to approach the violin logically. He is a positive genius; he can make a stick play. Do you know, he had me working on the A-major scale for three months with every conceivable bowing."

"Did he concentrate mostly on basic bow production of sound?"

"Yes. He made me aware of how much bow to use, which part of the bow to employ, how close to the bridge to play, or how far—the lexicon of tonal colors, the inherent personality of the bow. I never before had sufficiently realized the tremendous importance of the bow.

"We went back to Kreutzer, Dont, Rode and Fiorillo and did each étude a dozen different ways. At last I gained complete self-confidence in handling the violin and bow. Learning to analyze was an immense gain for me, since I have had to be very analytical in accomplishing things other people may have been able to take for granted."

"Did you work with Galamian on the left hand?"

"Yes, but we worked more on the bow arm. At that time, my left hand was better than my right."

"Ms. Lack, we know that some years ago you had an accident which threatened to end your concertizing career. Would you tell us about it?"

Lack winced as she recalled those dark days. "I had the tip of the little finger of my left hand bitten off by a vicious dog and couldn't play for an entire year. At the time of the accident the doctors were uncertain as to whether I would ever again be able to play. My fourth finger is extremely short. I worked for a year to rehabilitate this finger, and now I feel that it is stronger than ever.

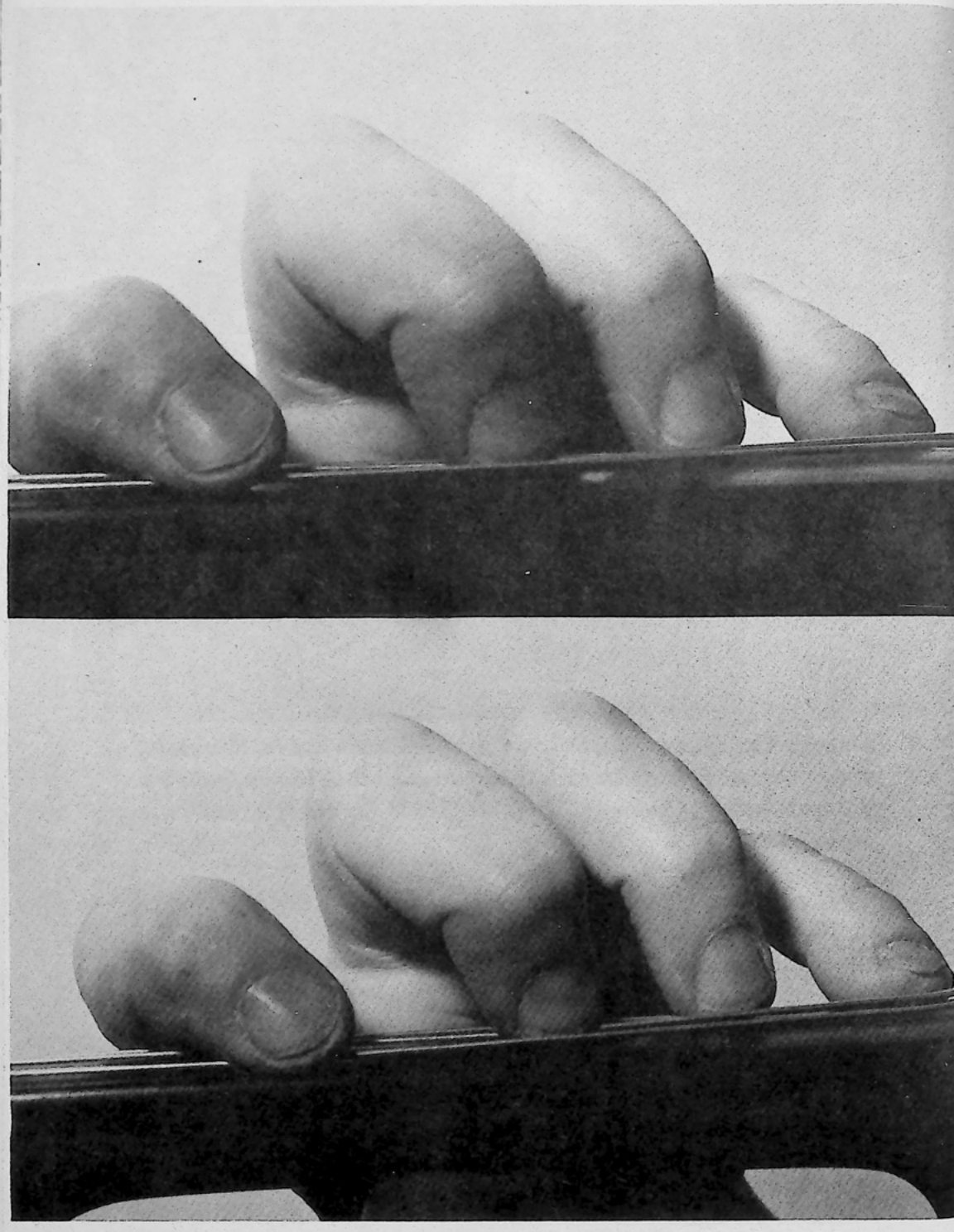
During the Queen Elisabeth Competition held in Brussels. 1951, Queen Elisabeth greets the contestants in the Queen's Conservatory Gardens. Fredell Lack is on the extreme right.

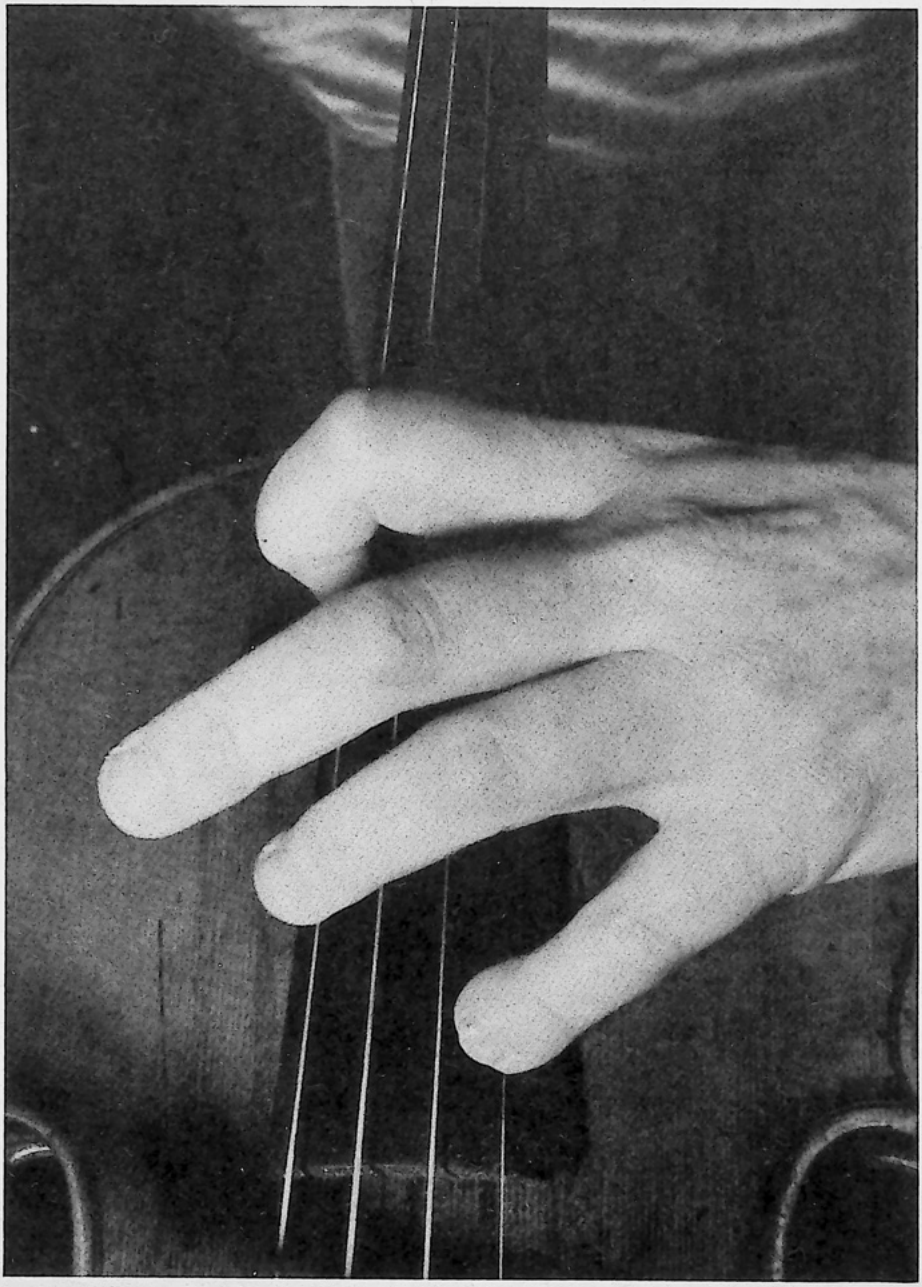
No one has ever commented about any weakness in my playing due to the accident.

"I play with a flat fourth finger, and when I take a high note and vibrate with it I have no anxiety. The fact that I was raised in the Ysaÿe tradition, which avoids use of that finger whenever possible, helped me to psychologically overcome my handicap."

"What did you do specifically to restore the finger?"

"I just used it and used it and vibrated with it all the time. Perhaps you have noticed that even after all these years, even as I sit here, I am unconsciously pressing my fourth finger against my thumb to strengthen it."





As is obvious from the photos above and on the facing page, Lack has an abnormal fourth finger. She had the tip bitten off by a vicious dog, but succeeded in overcoming this grevious handicap.

"But you must have encountered special problems, for instance, in big finger stretches."

"Yes, but I learned to cope with such things as octaves and tenths by bringing my left arm under the violin toward the bow arm, and I use the side of my first finger in playing tenths."

"How do you advise your pupils to hold the instruments?"

"I have no blanket rules. Such things depend on the size and shape of the hand and fingers. In my own case, I have a very short thumb, only about an inch-and-a-half long. Much of the time it is actually underneath the neck, and the top never protrudes as high as that of other violinists. I want my students to find the position which is natural and comfortable for them."

"How do you approach the technique of shifting positions?"

"I am kind of a crank about several things, and shifting is one of them. The basic trouble with most shifts is that they are not properly prepared, both mentally and physically. Position shifts should never be sudden or audible unless they are specifically done for expressive purposes. If I am shifting down from a high F on the E-string with the first finger to a third finger E, half a step below, my third finger almost steps on the fingernail of the first finger.

"An important point in shifting is that if the player will incline the wrist a bit backward immediately before shifting, he is 'halfway home.' This relaxes the hand. Then the top part of the wrist is a little ahead, leading the way."

"Do you feel that the bow plays a definite role in shifting?"

"Yes. I advise my students to make a slight 'wave' with the bow at the moment of shifting—to relax the bow pressure and move slowly. This also tends to relax the left hand."

"How about expressive slides?"

"I suggest isolating the two notes involved. Practice them alone with out even bothering to make corrections, for the moment. It's the 'getting there' that must be mastered. This applies to double-stops, too. The slide, tastefully executed, is one of the most beautiful devices we have. The violinist should strive to emulate the slides of great singers. It can make one's performance warmer,

"Galamian made me aware of how I actually did things. Persinger had tolerated all kinds of bow arm and vibrato movements, just as long as one made beautiful sounds and color."

more tender. The expressive slide itself should have lighter pressure than the notes just before and after, and these auxiliary notes must also be vibrant to create the most telling effect. Many players neglect this factor. The bow, too, must be more relaxed and moved more slowly during the sliding process."

"What are your thoughts about vibrato?"

"There are many ways to execute the vibrato, and it is not easy to teach. My own vibrato is a bit slower than that of many of today's performing artists. But it is my opinion that a vibrato which sounds a little slow in an ordinary room will sound just right in a concert hall. Often, people with 'electric' vibratos lose some of that quality in a hall. At one time I had strictly an arm vibrato to produce certain sonorous sounds that I wanted. There are times when just a wrist vibrato is not enough. I would say that my vibrato is a combination of wrist and arm. Let me say that I freely use vibrato in everything I play, and I want my pupils to use vibrato as a natural violinistic way of life."

"How do you coach your students in vibrato?"

"The primary thing is to get pupils to really listen to their vibrato. They must say to themselves, 'Is this what I really want to say? Is this my sound?' This takes years. Some people play and never learn to vibrate rhythmically in uneven passages; practice vibrato, first slowly, then twice as fast as they need it. They must learn to think objectively about vibrato, the better to teach themselves. Of course, we can tell them to vibrate wider on the G-string, more narrowly on the E-string and more intensely on the expressive notes. But essentially the student must develop his own vibrato-consciousness."

"Do you advocate that scales be practiced with vibrato?"

"Yes. Vibrato should be practiced in slow scales with both a narrow and wide oscillation. The movement should be even and continuous. I would liken this to the mellow glow of an eight-watt electric bulb which never goes out—through shifts, bow changes, et al."

"Do you have any more advice to students on violin and bow usage?"

"Yes, I would like to tell them not to be afraid to use the lower part of the bow. Most of them play too much on the side of the hair and too far from the bridge. I prefer a flat bow, except at the frog.

"There are many ways to execute the vibrato, and it is not easy to teach. My own vibrato is a bit slower than that of many of my colleagues.

And an up-beat should never be played with a whole bow. Students must learn to think musically in bow usage, not merely seek out what is superficially convenient. As for the left hand, too often they play with fingers that are too curved and 'spidery.' If more finger flesh is used, the sound will be more solid. And another thing—I don't like to see the violin resting in the well of the hand with the thumb too high. This locks the left hand."

"Would you tell us your opinions about the current trends in the make-up of violin recital programs as opposed to those of your student years?"

"I have strong opinions on this subject, especially in view of the fact that in this particular period, though American concert sponsors are buying a large amount of group attractions and soloist-with-orchestra artists, violin recitals are very few and far between. I recall one program years ago when I played a Vivaldi concerto, the Dvorak Concerto, Dohnayi's *Ruralia Hungarica* and a group of short pieces—all with piano accompaniment. In those days it was possible to play a Dvorak, Mozart, Saint-Saëns or even a Walton concerto with piano, though of course we would not often play the Beethoven, Brahms or Tchaikovsky concerto without orchestra. Today it is worth your life to play a concerto with piano in a major city."

"Which concertos do you think can be gainfully played with piano?"

"Any of those which do not have a heavy orchestration. Off hand I'd say those by Haydn, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski—even Bruch. And there are quite a few others. You see, I feel that violin recitals have become too intellectualized, and if something is not done to change this trend, one day violin recitals will be a thing of the past like so many other forms of art presentations."

"Do you think the old manner of programming will ever return?"

"Sometimes things go out of fashion and then come back again. In any case, we must do something to get the public back to violin recitals. The way they are now constituted is just too dull for the public. The average concert-goer will enjoy listening to a singer in 20 five-minute pieces, but is turned off by a violinist who plays four 30-minute sonatas. Certainly I am in favor of programs

The Queen Elisabeth Competition, Brussels, 1951. The finalists were held at the Chapelle Musicale in complete isolation for the last ten days of the competition. This photo, taken by Queen Elisabeth herself, shows, from left to right, seated: Elise Czerfalvi, Hedi Gigler and Fredell Lack. Standing, Mikhail Vayman, Olga Kaverzneva, Leonid Kogan and Luben Yardanoff.

that contain works of high musical stature, and I am opposed to musically insipid programs as a way out of the dilemma. But I think a program should contain many different types of music, and there is nothing wrong with playing pieces at the end of a program with the deliberate intent of luring the audience back to another recital."

"Do you think the Kreisler pieces are beginning to make a comeback?"

"Yes. We are starting to hear some of them again, on occasion, and I'm heartily in favor of this. It is just unfortunate that there is such a gap between what the public wishes to hear and what the critics think they should hear! I would still want to hear part or all of a Bach solo sonata and perhaps a lofty Beethoven sonata on the program. It is up to Itzhak Perlman and the other younger players to re-introduce all-embracing violin recital programs."

"What do you think of the contemporary trend that has banished the use of expressive slides and portamentos in violin performance?"

"I am as much opposed to this manner of 'typewriting' playing as I am to vulgar 'shmeering'. What if all singers were to sing without any type of expressive connection between notes? In recent years many violinists have become so oblivious of the older tradition of enhancing lyric phrases with artfully contrived finger embellishments, that is, slides and position changes made, of course, in good taste, that they practically imitate the exclusively up-and-down piano finger technique."

"Do you feel that audiences of today are any different from audiences of yesteryear?"

"Without a doubt! Audiences today are more restless; they have little time for contemplation. They generally prefer to read a condensation rather than a whole book. All too many of them have lost the serenity of sitting for a couple of hours and losing themselves completely under the spell of some musician's consum-

Fredell Lack and Isaac Stern in Portland, Oregon, where they had a chance meeting. Lack was soloist with the Portland Orchestra and Stern was playing a recital.

mate art. They tend to quickly lose their patience. They want to thrill to climaxes without having to experience the pre-climax buildup."

"Do you think that our conservatories and music schools are different from your own student years?"

"In certain respects. In my youth, many, many more young people had 'stars-in-their-eyes' for a solo career and toiled incessantly toward that end. Today our goals are perhaps more realistic in that we openly recognize that there is no guarantee that even the most gifted can have a solo career. Now students are being trained in a more all-around way so that they will be equipped to earn their living in more ways than one.

"I am now an Artist-in-Residence and Professor at the State University of Houston. When our students graduate they are adept sight-readers and have gone through a good part of the orchestra and chamber music literature. And I give my pupils as much solo literature as I can. We encourage them to get their M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s."

"How do you approach the performance of Bach's solo sonatas?"

"The older I get, the more simply I play them, but I strive to avoid blandness."

"Do you believe in playing this music without dynamics in conformity with certain modern editions?"

"Absolutely not. I believe that musicians in Bach's day were permitted much leeway in their performances and that Bach intended the musician to play far more expressively than the lack of markings in the original edition would indicate. I see no reason why Bach should not be played with color and warmth of spirit."

"What exercise and étude books do you give your students?"

"All the standard books. But I have a few personal favorites such as Yost, for shifting, Stoessel's études for independence of the fingers, Polo's études for the intermediate student and Dounis' flexibility exercises."

"I believe that musicians in Bach's day were permitted much leeway in their performances and that Bach intended the musician to play far more expressively . . ."

Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Applebaum visit Lack in her hotel suite during her concert tour of New York. A the time she was actively concertizing, and was Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Violin at the State University of Houston in Texas. Lack is still at the University in Houston.

"Mr. Galamian taught me to approach the violin logically. . . . he had me working on the A-major scale for three months with every conceivable bowing."

". . . I am dying to do the Elgar Concerto if I can find a conductor willing to do it."

"Are you nervous before a program?"

"I think any artist worth his salt has a certain amount of anxiety before a concert. The more one plays, the more self-confidence one develops. I always have more anxiety if I am performing a work that is new for me than one of my 'old friends' that I have played countless times."

"Do you find it more difficult to learn new repertoire as you get older?"

"Not at all. I am constantly changing my repertoire. I have added many works to my actual performance repertoire—the Concerto by Barber, Lalo's Concerto in F, the Szymanowski Second Concerto, the Shostakovich First Concerto—and I am dying to do the Elgar Concerto, when I can find a conductor willing to do it."

"What were your most thrilling perfomances?"

"I love the second Prokofiev Concerto because it displays such a variety of moods."

"There have been many. But a few stand out—such as the time I played the Shostakovich with Lawrence Foster and the Houston Symphony, and when I did the Prokofiev First Concerto with Barbirolli and the Halle orchestra over BBC—and, oh yes—when I played the Tchaikovsky Concerto with the Stockholm Philharmonic and my parents surprised me by flying to Stockholm to hear the concert!"

Lack had previously agreed to analyze and discuss with us one of her favorite major works. She selected Prokofiev's Concerto No. 2 in G-minor and presented us with her personal copy which contains her own fingerings and bar markings (International Music Company edition).

"I love to perform this Concerto," she said, "because it displays such an extraordinary variety of moods. There is soaring

When I was six, Tosca Berger, a pupil of Ysaÿe, came to Tulsa. It was backstage at her concert that I first touched a violin."

lyricism as in the first movement themes and the angelic slow movement; caustic, explosive rhythmic sorties, as in parts of the first movement and the opening of the third movement; mystery, as in the muted second movement passages; and uproarious humor as at 57 of the third movement. The work is simply permeated with those abrupt, quicksilver changes of character for which Prokofiev is noted."

"How do you view the opening section?"

"The opening theme is hauntingly beautiful and I hate to hear it played too fast. I love the undulation of the line, and I like to feel free to stretch, ever-so-slightly, the change of key occuring one bar before 1. Prokofiev so often shifts keys up or down a half-tone and steps into another world of an entirely different color. The violinist, too, must be prepared to switch moods just as suddenly from flowing lyricism to sharp, strident rhythmic patterns, as in five bars after 1, and back again to the lyric at 2."

"Isn't it amazing," we noted, "how even during an established mood, Prokofiev will swiftly veer to a variation of that general mood for several bars."

"Right," agreed Lack. She pointed to a section in the sheet music Samuel Applebaum was holding. "Here, during the *poco piu mosso* at 4, he inserts a mocking rhythm *pianissimo* at the tip of the bow on the first sixteenth note of each group. Then he melts back into the lyric one bar before 5 in preparation for the heavenly second theme at bar 6. This melody must soar with a sensuously beautiful tone. But the player should beware of over-doing the portamentos—not too many in rapid succession."

"How do you handle the eight successive repetitions in the section starting six measures after 9?"

"I try to vary them as imaginatively as I can by stressing different notes and places in each bar, and I point for the restrained

"My family moved to Houston when I was ten. I went to study with Josephine Boudreaux, a pupil of Ševčik and Hubay."

calm of 10. Then we have a delicious dialogue between the solo violin and orchestra, answering each other expressively. This leads into 11, one of the most exciting passages of the Concerto."

"Do you find these passages as clumsy to handle as do most violinists?"

"Yes—there is no easy fingering for these crawling chromatic figurations, so I opt for what I feel is the cleanest one, going up on one string wherever possible. I make it a point to punctuate each key change with a marked bow accent. I think of this section, with its intense inner rhythm, as a continuing *accelerando,* getting wilder and wilder. Bar 13 should be executed as a flat frog *martelé.*

"Let us jump to the coda which I think is quite remarkable. Once more we hear the opening theme, but this time it jumps abruptly into B-minor and only resolves at the last split-second on the two final chords. One must be doubly careful with the *pizzicato* chords that start in bar 30. Often, they are not clearly heard, and it

"My mother decided that I must play for Louis Persinger, whom she considered the ultimate authority on violin matters."

"He [Persinger] was the most charming, imaginative and soft-spoken man."

is vital to hear the top G of the final chord. The *pizzicato* chords should be taken at a slight angle toward the player."

"What observations can you give us concerning the *Andante assai* movement?"

"First of all, I find the marked 108 too slow—I prefer about 120. The violinist should be exceptionally meticulous about his blend and balance with the orchestra in the various counterpoint interweavings. At five bars after 34 I am careful to play the 'doodling' triplets *expressivo,* with gentle 'hairpin' dynamic phrasing. Once again, at 36, we encounter the wind-in-the-trees shimmering effect. This is a difficult section for pure intonation. As always, in such passages, I stay on one string as much as I can and try to increase the general tempo a bit from the previous section."

"Do you then slow down somewhat at the *Allegretto* which starts at 38?"

"Yes. This is a jagged, rather lugubrious theme that, at bar 39, swiftly modulates with gauche humor. The orchestra then takes over and the soloist provides 'window dressing' with batteries of leaping 16th-note figures. I start this spiccato, but as things intensify, I resort to solid *detaché* on the string. Bars 43-44 strut pompously, then we are back to the opulent opening second movement theme in a rather flowery transformation. The coda is simply adorable, with the soloist switching roles with the orchestra by closing the movement playing a facsimile of the opening orchestral *pizzicatos.*"

"How do you negotiate the variegated rhythmic impulses of the final *Allegro, ben marcato*?"

"This is a really dance-like exciting movement. One should 'sit on' the half-note chords from bar two through bar seven. The chords at bars eight and nine must be short and crisp. Four bars after 49 to four bars before 50 should be in almost Viennese 'held-back' waltz rhythm, with a lift before each bar and the first two eight-notes of each bar a bit closer together in rhythm. One must fairly soar in the G-string waltz motif at bar 50.

"Do you play the 7/4 rhythm at 52 piano, as marked?"

"I was working on the Bach* Chaconne *which Persinger likened to a colossal chandelier with tier upon tier of radiance blossoming out from the massive central core."

"When I was 17 I won a four-year scholarship to Juilliard. . . . graduated at 21, played a successful Town Hall debut, won a few prizes and made the beginnings of a career."

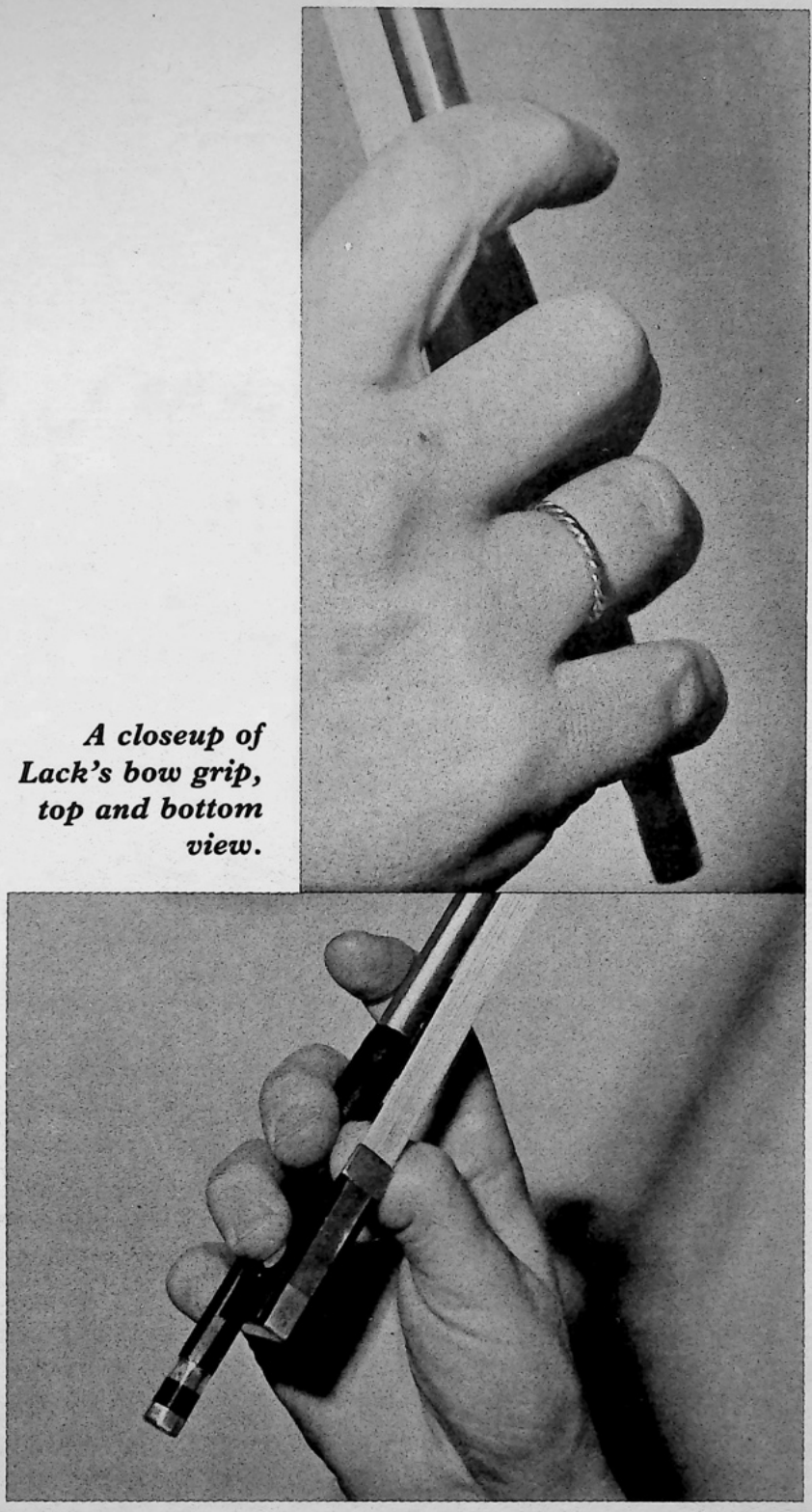
"No. I raise the level to at least *mezzo-forte,* because the orchestra is doubling the solo line. This should be played in a lunging, swirling style.

"At bar 57 Prokofiev's boisterous humor erupts again—bursting with character, with grotesque leaps. And it is most effective to wait a split second before the sixteenth-note upbeat to 59. At five bars after 59 we come to the recurrent rhythmc *ostinato* that is so exciting when played with sufficient bite and energy.

"Do you watch the conductor or not, during the tricky 5/4 bars of the coda?"

"Emphatically—never! This coda is one of the most dangerous places I know. Conductors invariably want to conduct the 5/4 in *two* and *three,* whereas we visualize the rhythm in *three* and *two.* Don't watch him, I beg you!! The double-bass *pizzicato* usually drags and slows down the violinist, and woe unto him who hesitates—as the saying goes. It is tantamount to a 'battle royal' just for the soloist to maintain the tempo, to be heard, and to end in concert with the orchestra. From bar 83 to the end, it is Go-Go-Go!"

Fredell lack started studying the violin whan she was 6 years old.



A closeup of Lack's bow grip, top and bottom view.

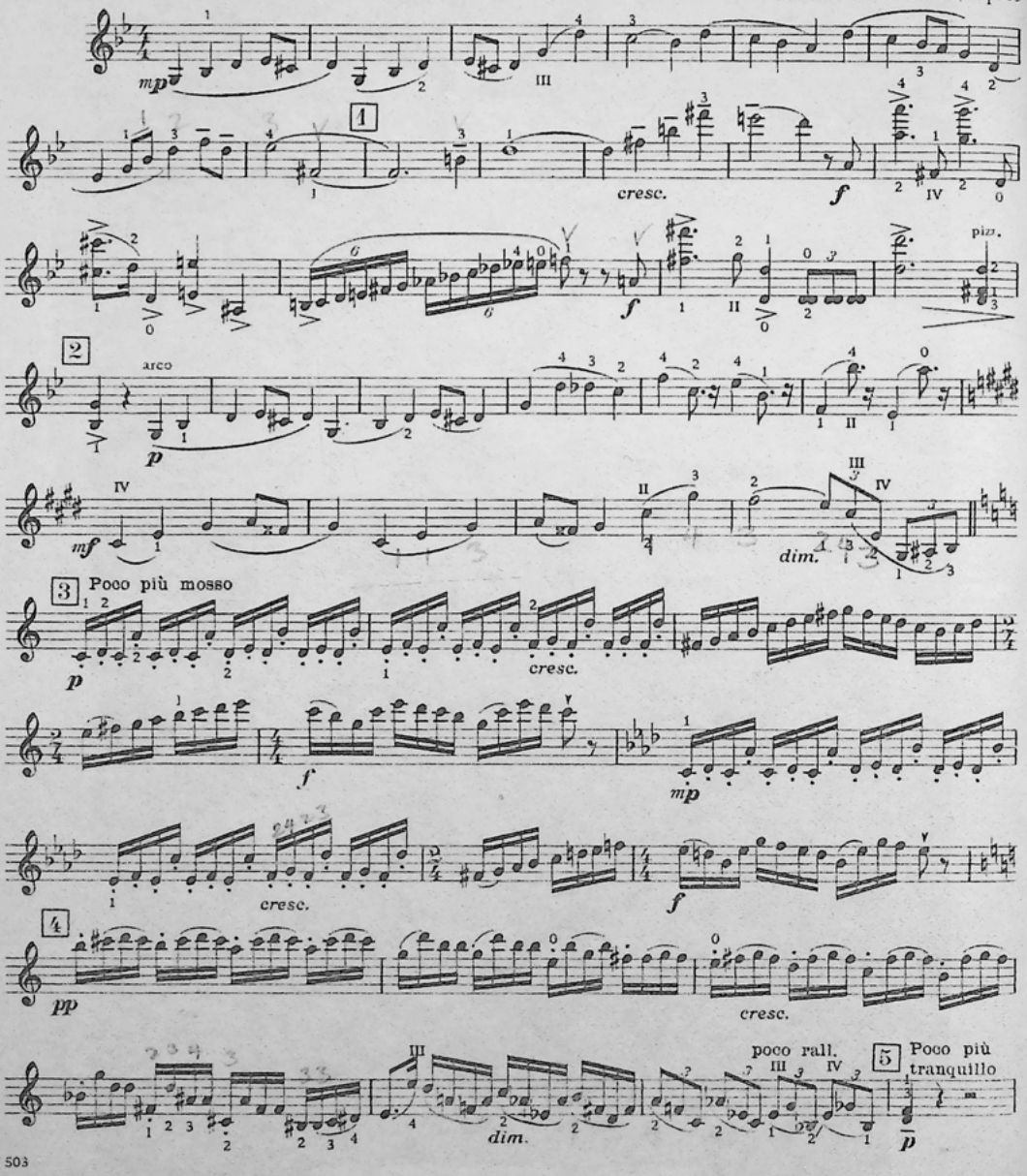
CONCERTO No. 2

VIOLIN

Allegro moderato ♩ = 108

I.

SERGEI PROKOFIEFF, Op. 63



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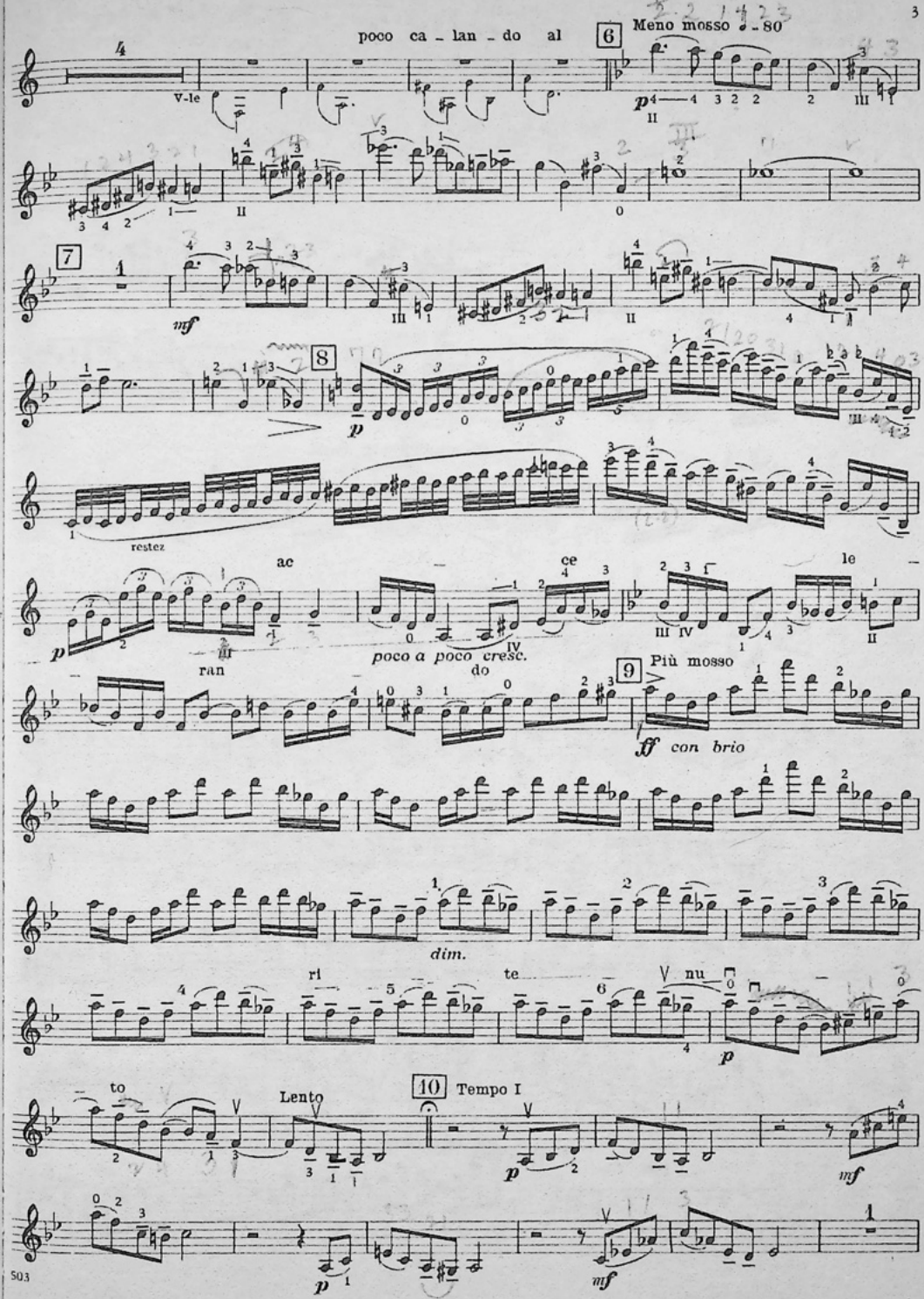
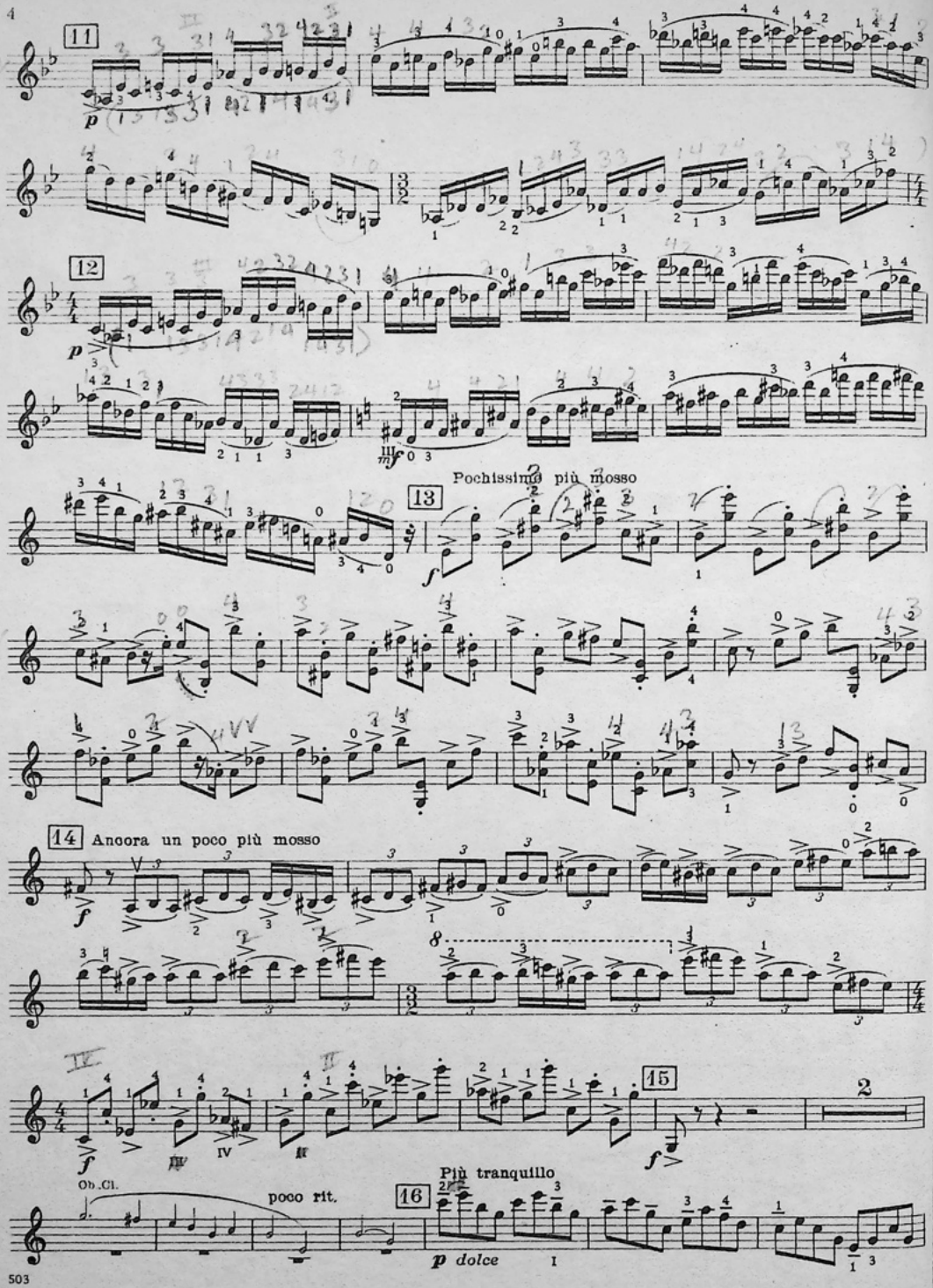
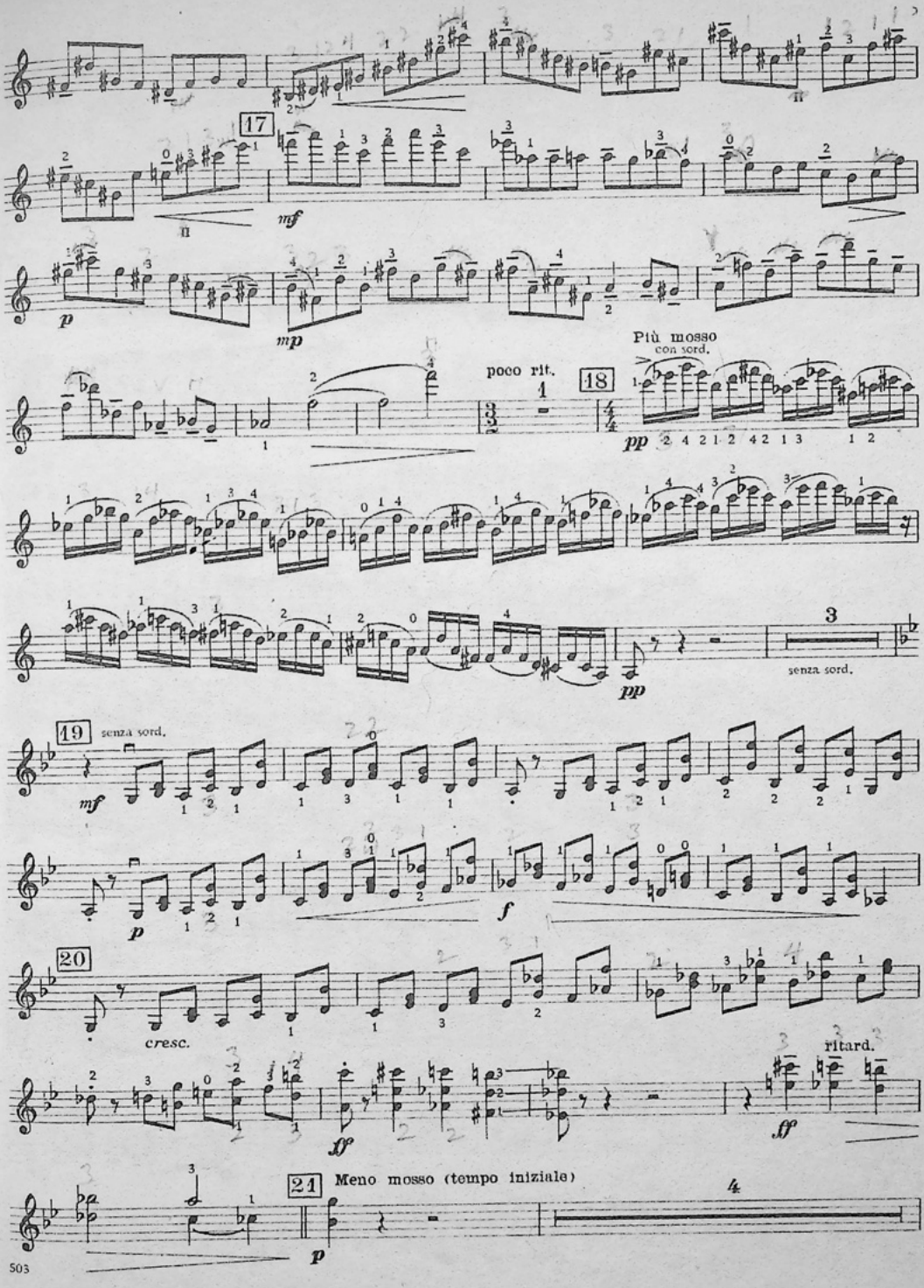
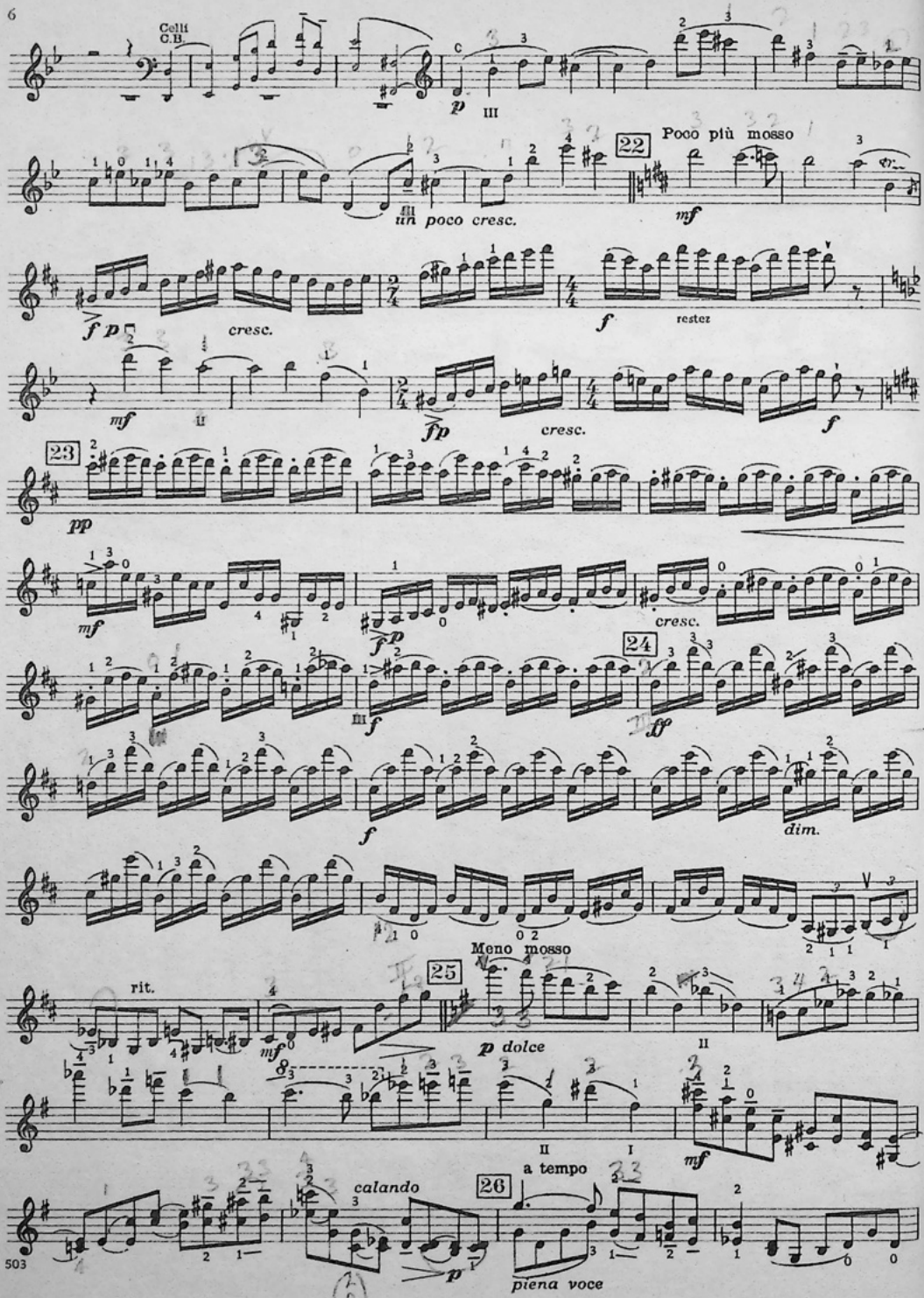
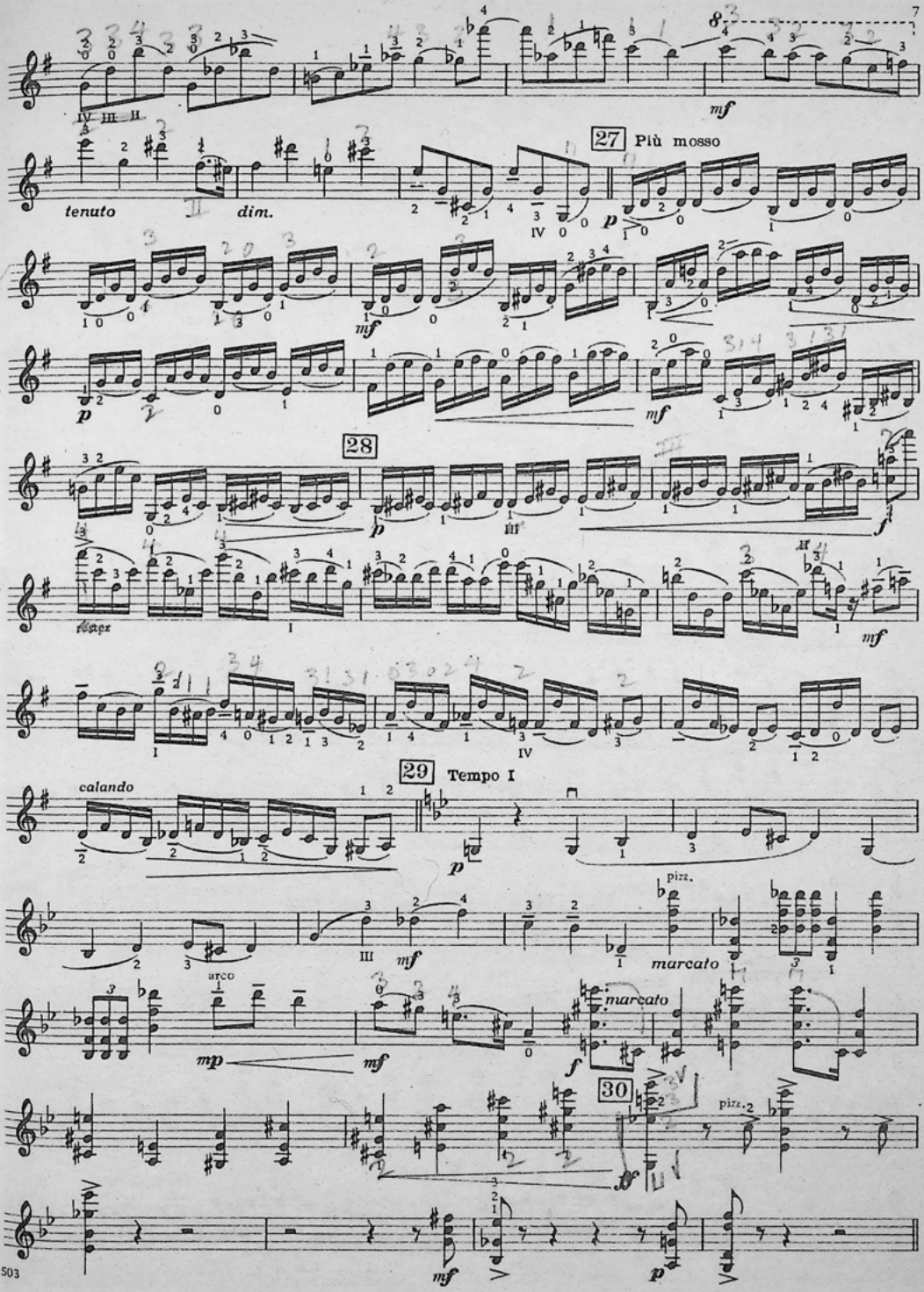

poco ca - lan - do al
6
Meno mosso ♩ = 80
V-le
7
mf
8
p
restez
ac ce le
ran
poco a poco cresc.
do
9
Più mosso
ff con brio
dim.
ri te nu
p
to
Lento
10
Tempo I
mf
p
mf

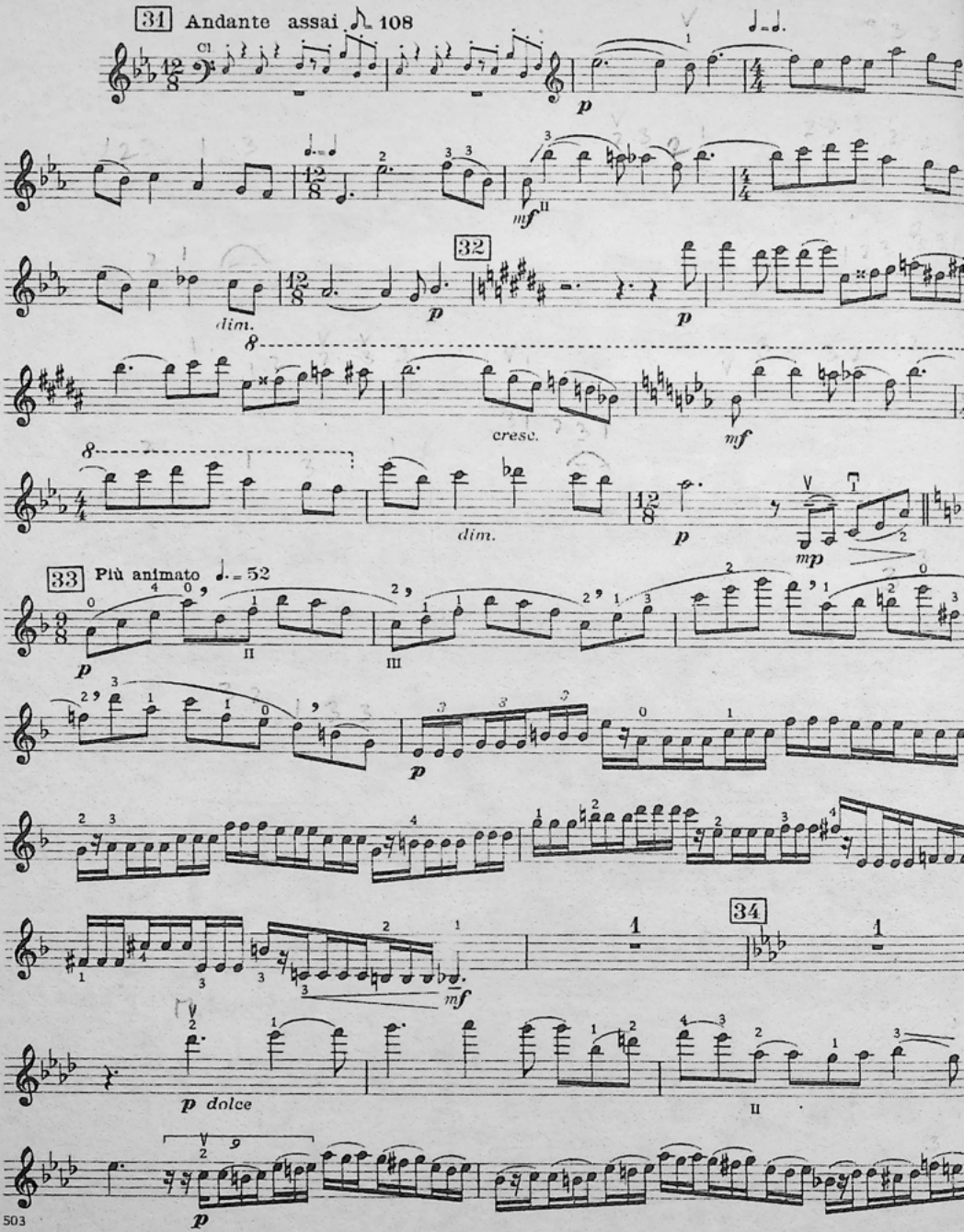

11
12
Pochissimo più mosso
13
14 Ancora un poco più mosso
15
Più tranquillo
16
Ob. Cl.
poco rit.
p dolce

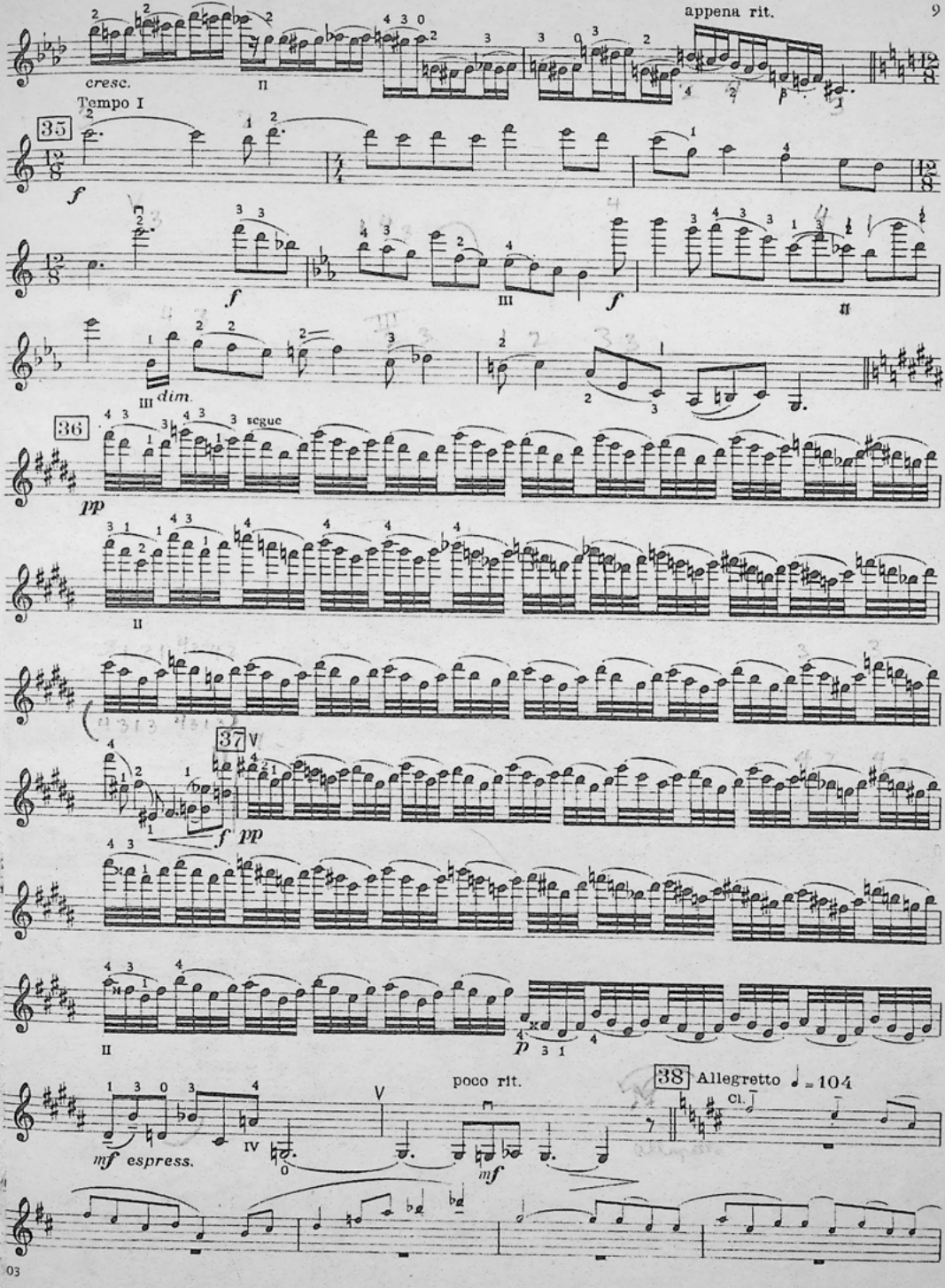
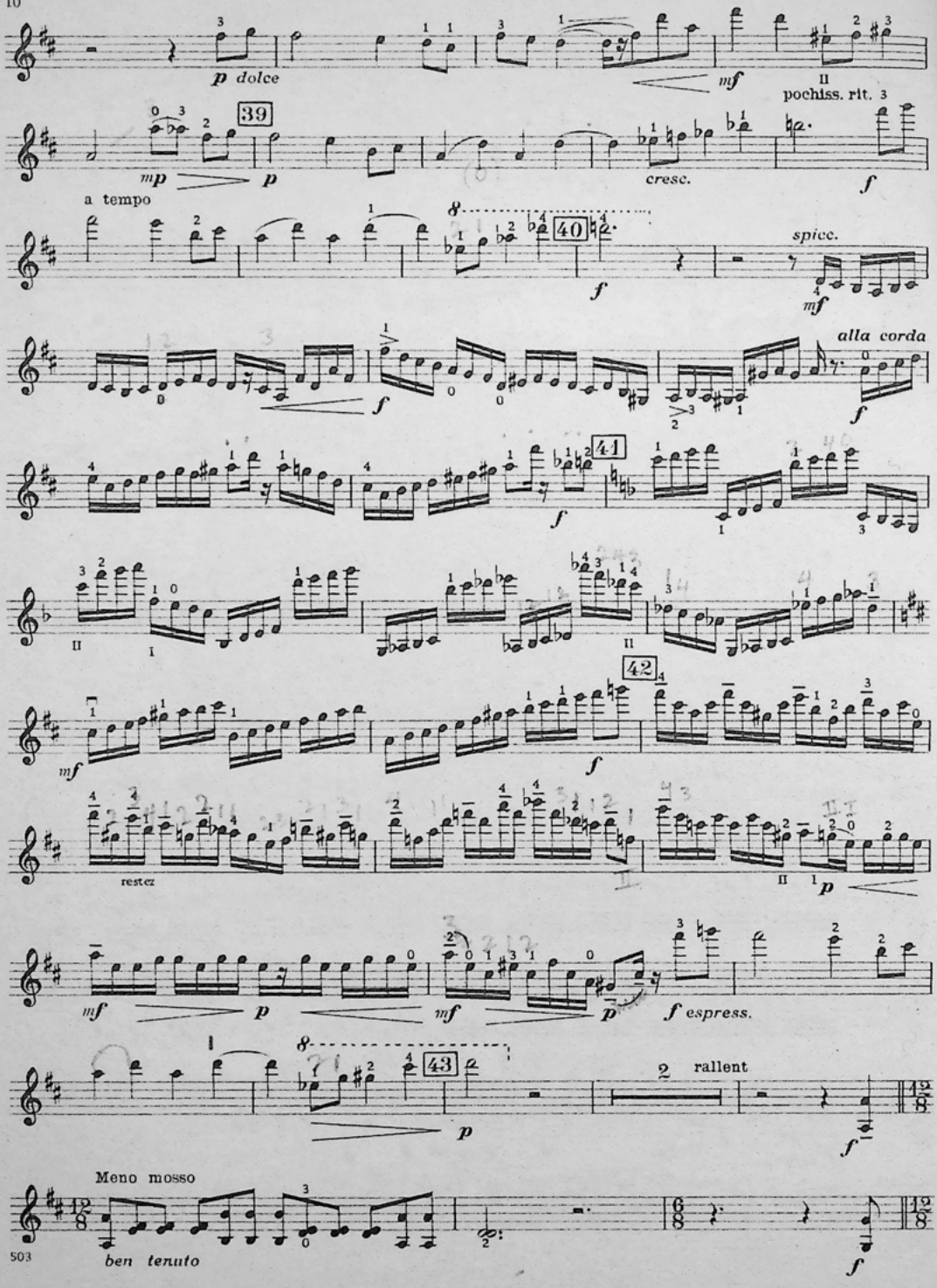

17
mf
p
mp
poco rit.
18
Più mosso
con sord.
pp
3
senza sord.
19
senza sord.
mf
p
f
20
cresc.
ff
ritard.
ff
21
Meno mosso (tempo iniziale)
4
p


6
Celli
C.B.
22
Poco più mosso
un poco cresc.
cresc.
rester
23
cresc.
24
dim.
Meno mosso
25
rit.
p dolce
a tempo
26
calando
piena voce
503


27 Più mosso
tenuto
dim.
28
29 Tempo I
calando
pizz.
marcato
arco
30
503

II.


31 Andante assai ♪ 108
Cl
p
mf
32
dim.
p
cresc.
mf
dim.
p
mp
33 Più animato ♩. = 52
p
III
p
34
mf
p dolce
p

503

appena rit.
cresc.
Tempo I
35
f
dim.
36
segue
pp
37
V
f
pp
p
poco rit.
38 Allegretto ♩ = 104
Cl.
mf espress.
mf

10
p dolce
mf
II
pochiss. rit.
39
mp
p
cresc.
f
a tempo
40
f
spicc.
mf
alla corda
f
41
f
II
I
II
42
mf
f
rest.
II
p
mf
p
mf
p
f espress.
43
p
2
rallent
f
Meno mosso
ben tenuto
f
503

rit. al

44 Andante assai, come prima

p

mf

mf *dim.* con sord. *p*

45 *p*

f *p*

senza sord.

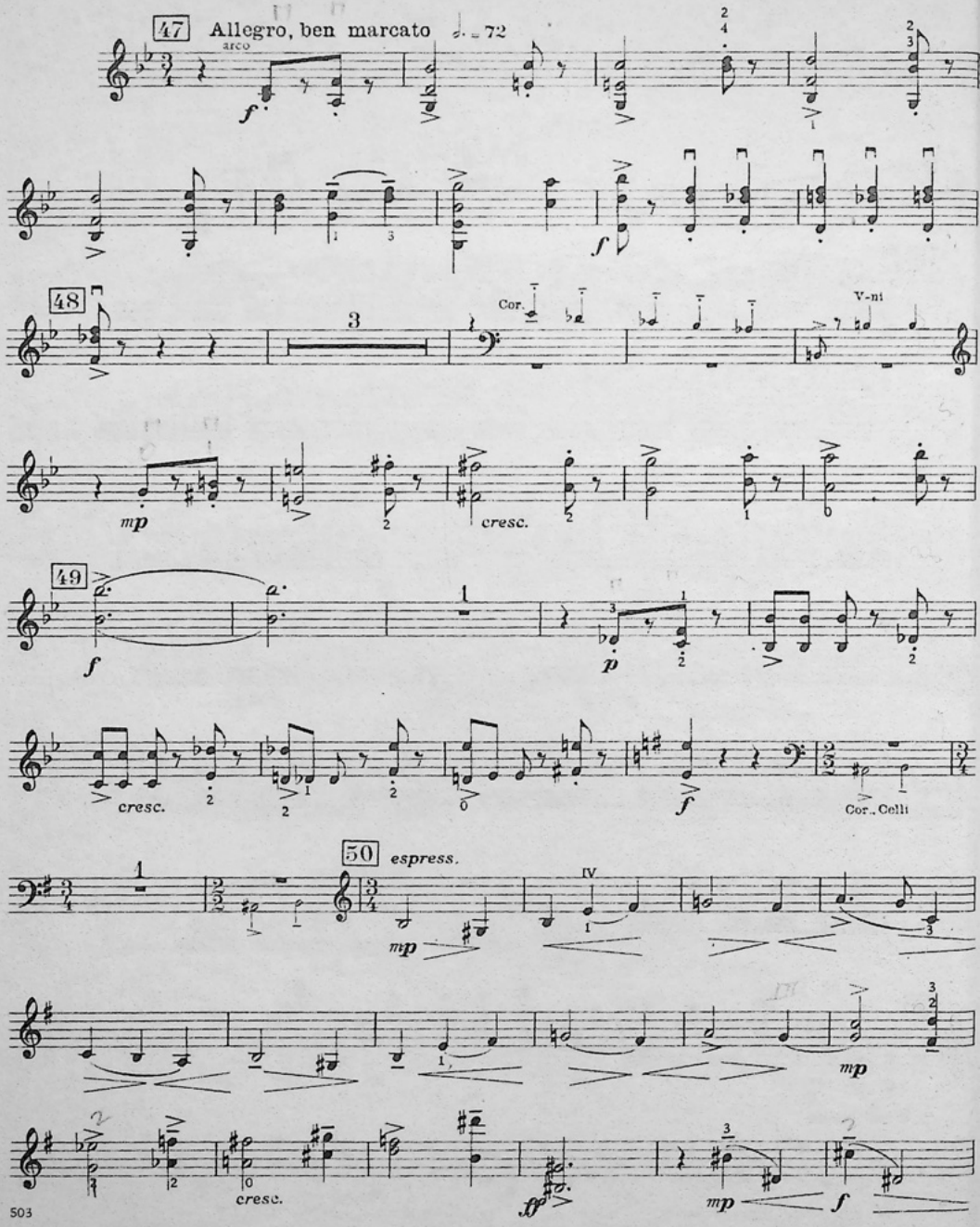
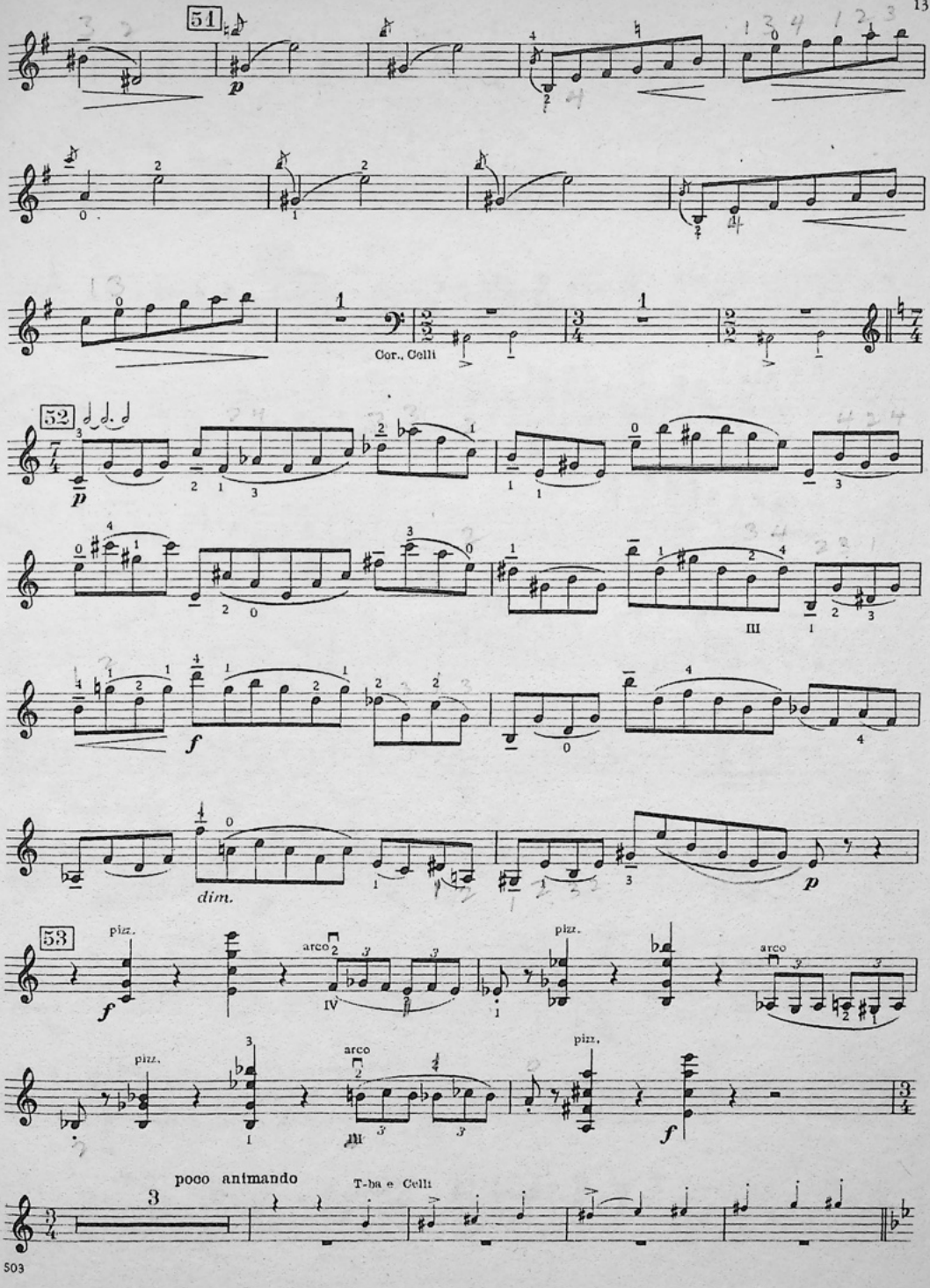
46 *mf espress.* *al* – *lar* *ff* – *gan* – *do*

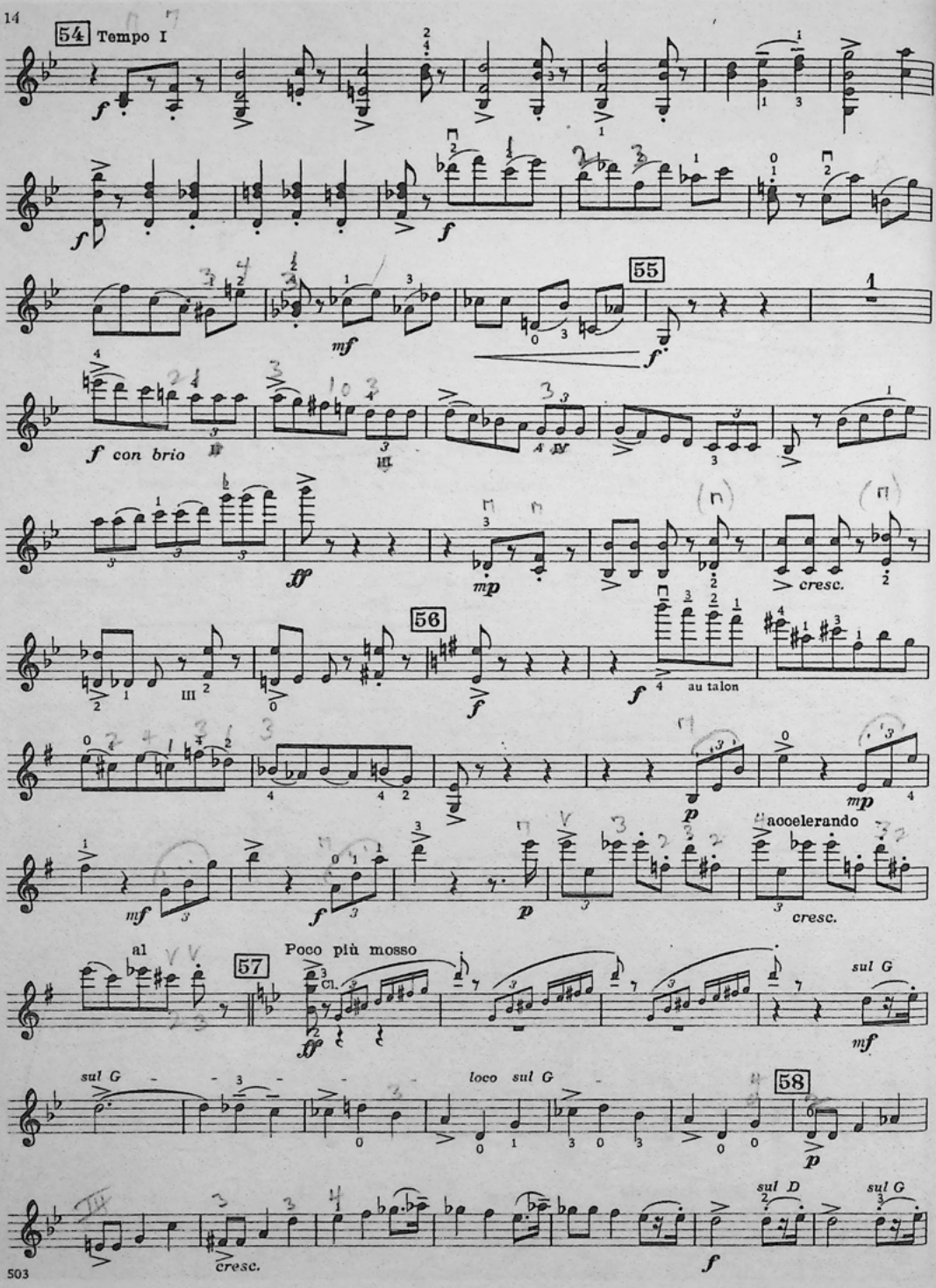
Meno mosso

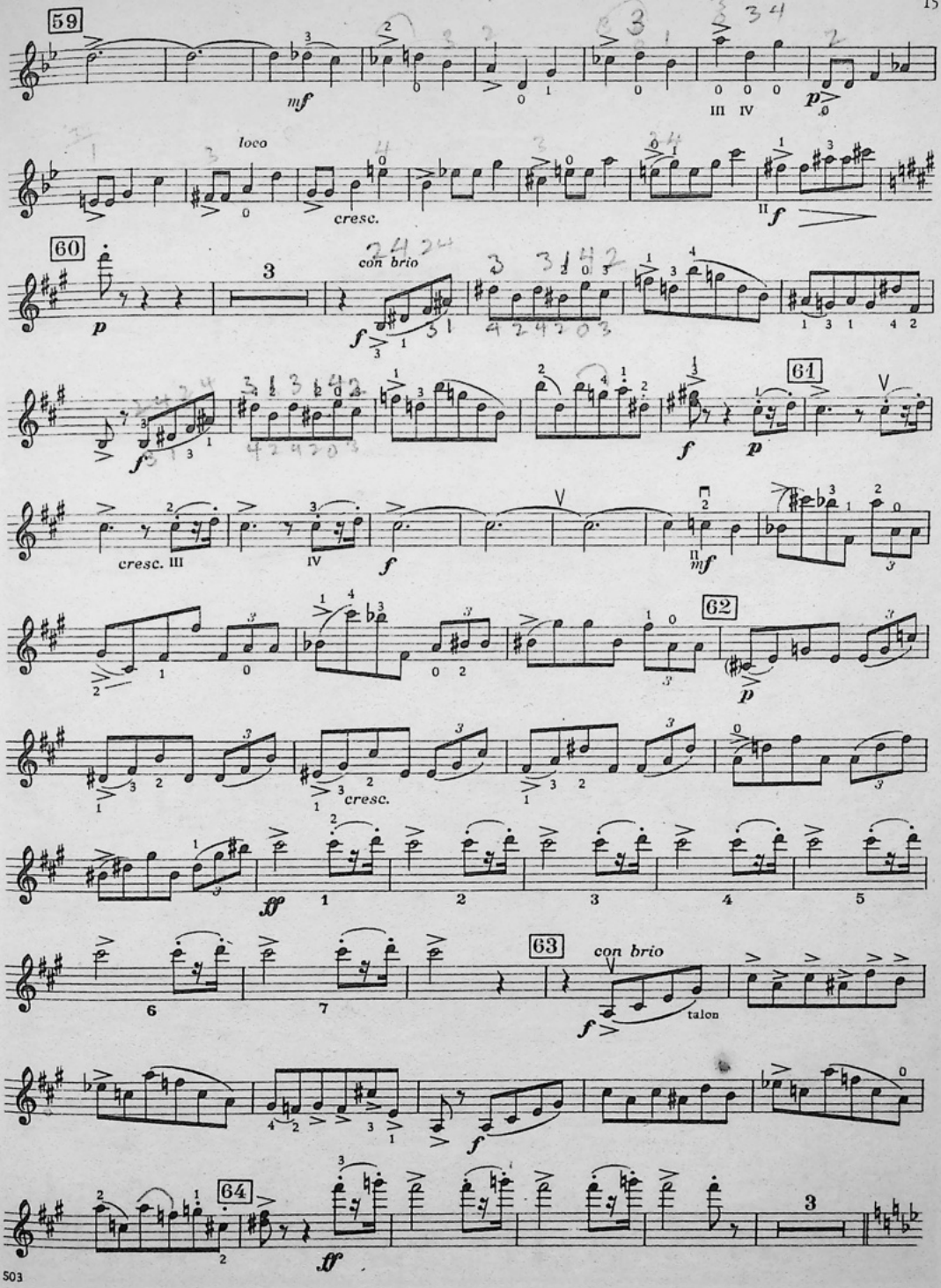
pizz.

mf un poco agravamente *dim.* rit. *p*

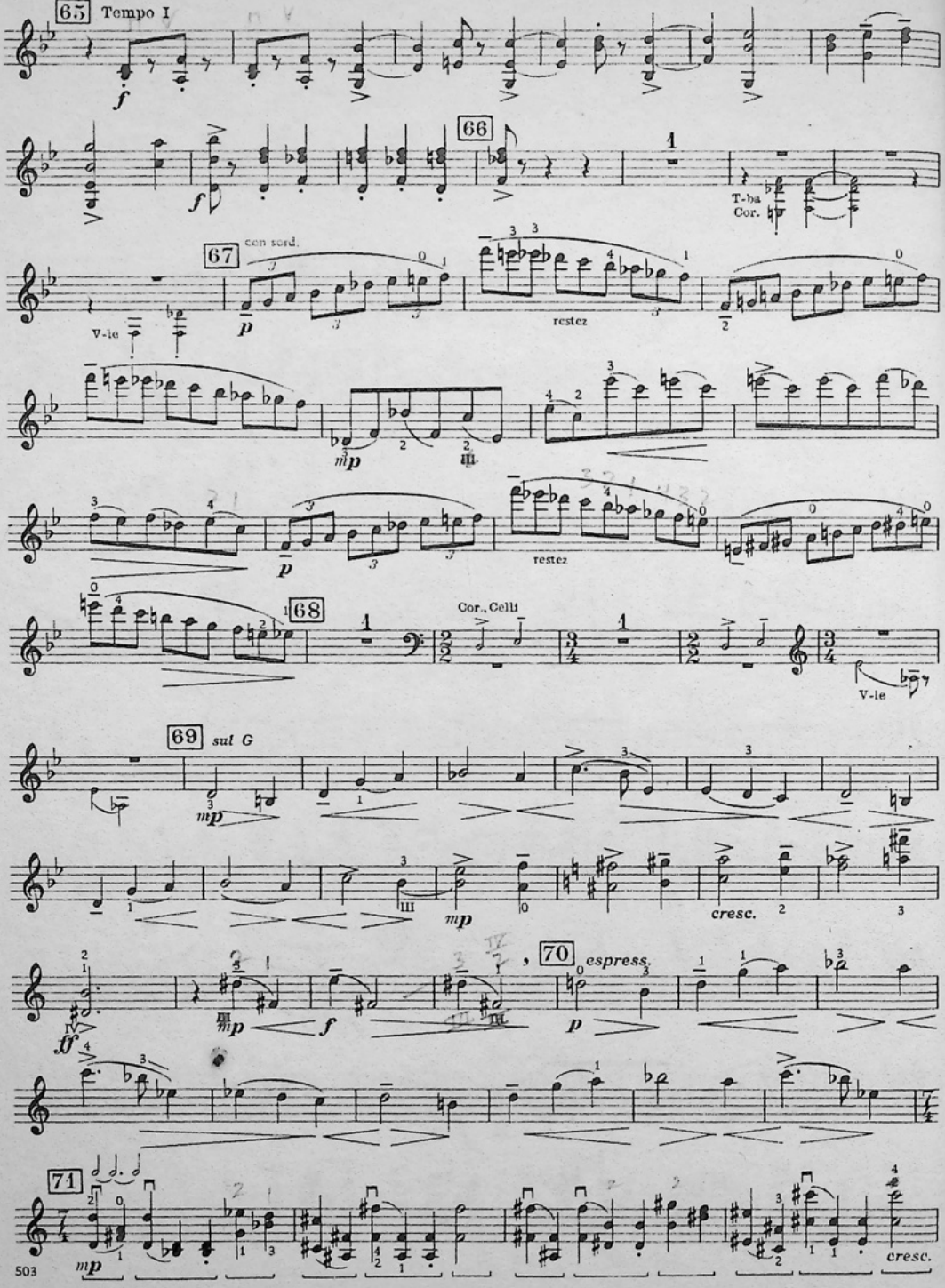
503

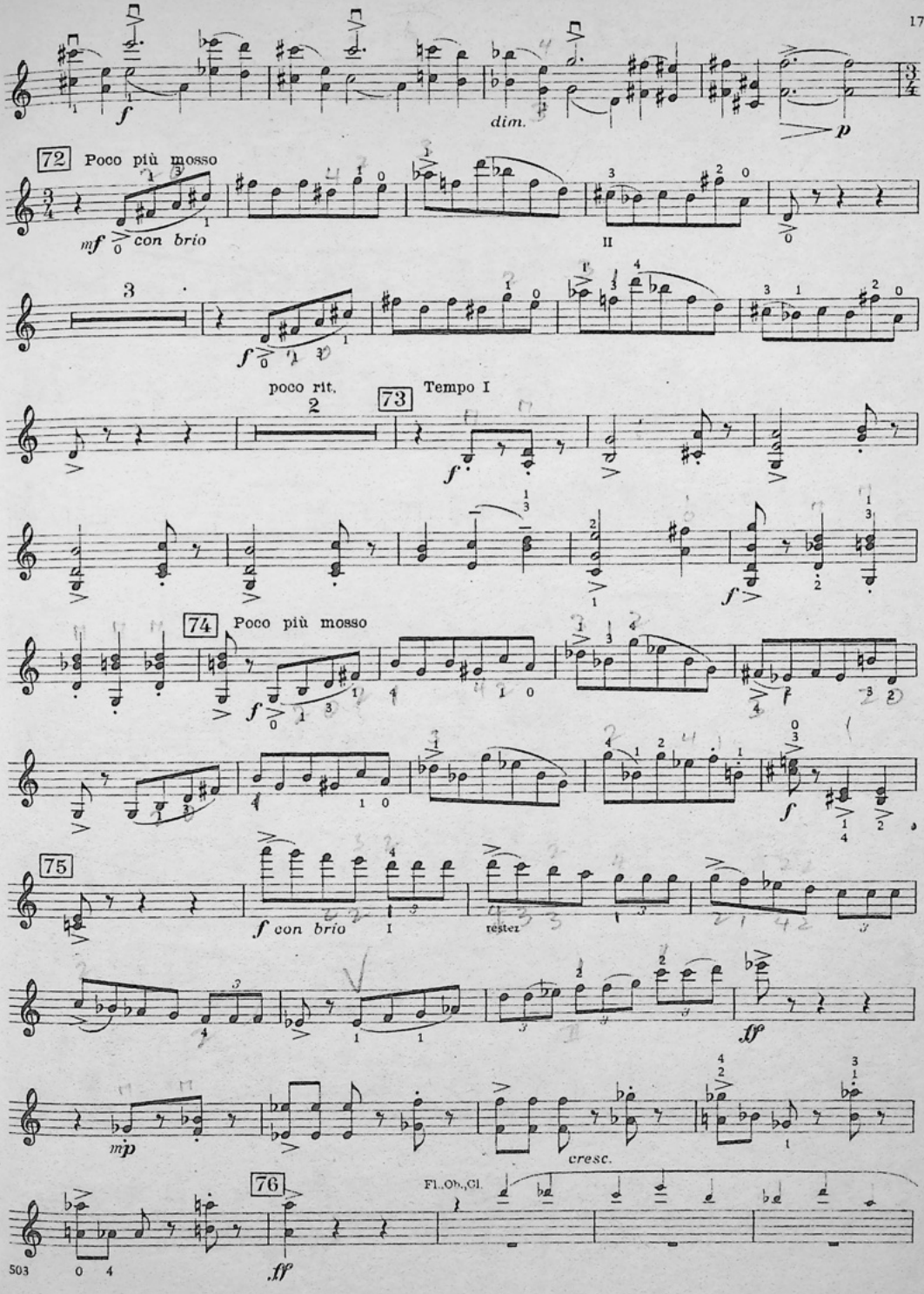
III.

47
Allegro, ben marcato
arco
♩. = 72
f
48
Cor.
V-ni
mp
cresc.
49
f
p
cresc.
f
Cor., Celli
50
espress.
mp
IV
mp
cresc.
ff
mp
f

51
p
Cor., Celli
52
p
III
f
dim.
p
53
pizz.
arco
IV
pizz.
arco
pizz.
III
arco
pizz.
f
poco animando
T-ba e Celli
503

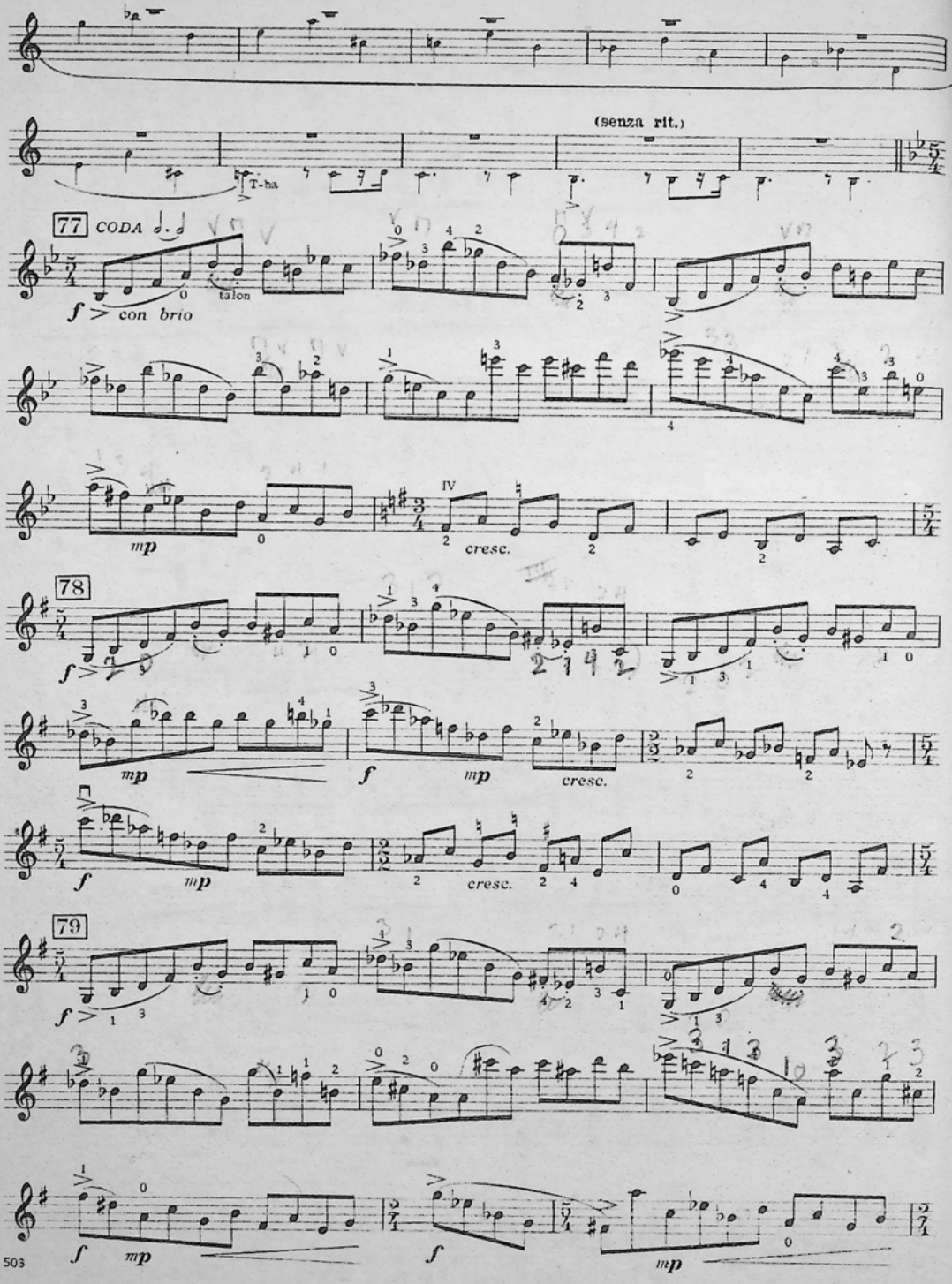

14
54 Tempo I
f
f
55
mf
f
1
f con brio
III
ff
mp
cresc.
56
f
au talon
p
mp
mf
f
p
accelerando
cresc.
al
57
Poco più mosso
Cl.
ff
sul G
mf
sul G
loco sul G
58
p
sul D
sul G
cresc.
f
503

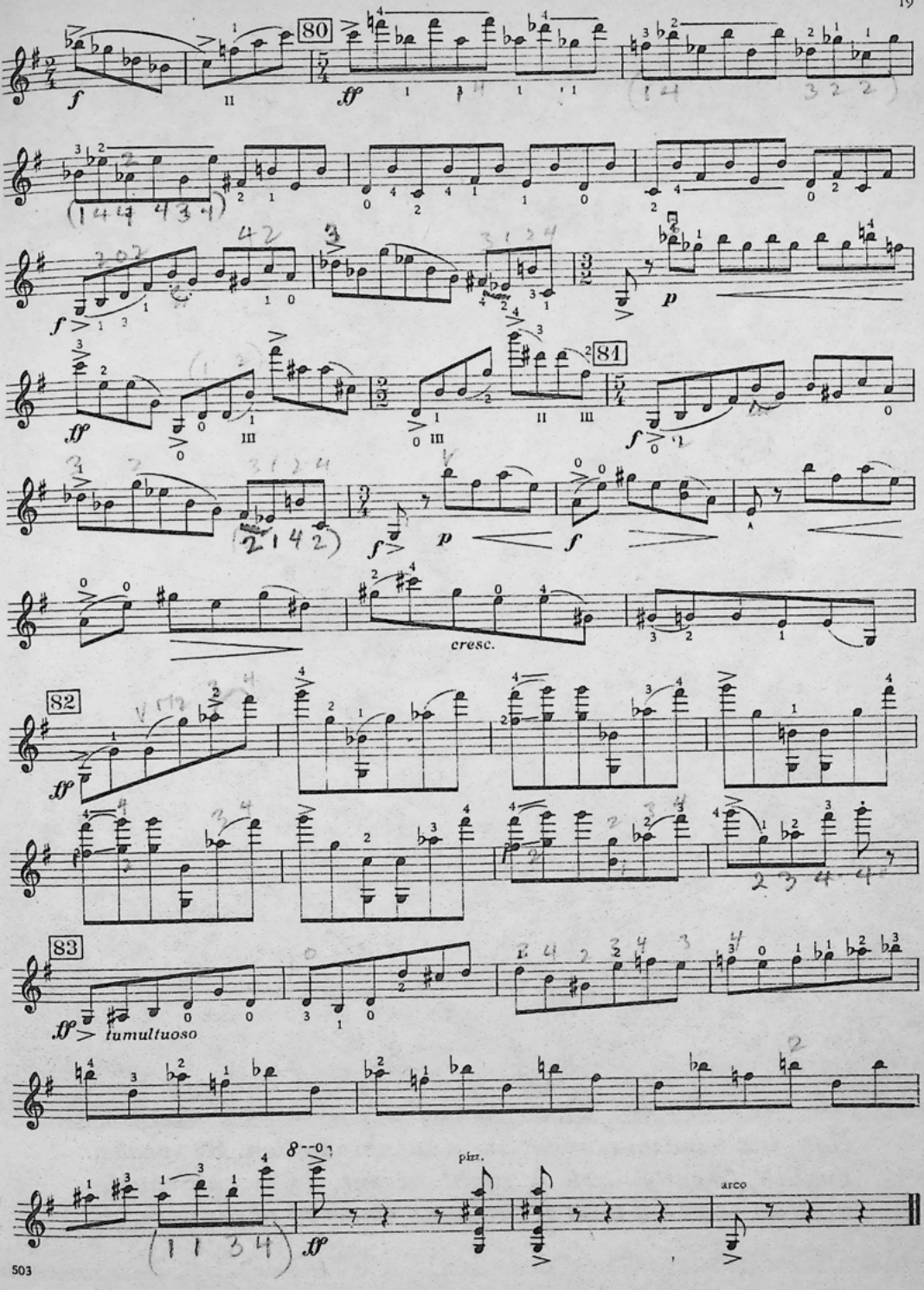

59
mf
III IV
p
loco
cresc.
II
f
60
p
con brio
f
61
f
p
cresc. III
IV
f
II
mf
62
p
cresc.
ff
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
63
con brio
talon
f
64
ff
3

503


65 Tempo I
66
T-ba
Cor.
67 con sord.
V-le
restez
mp
68
Cor., Celli
V-le
69 sul G
mp
cresc.
70 espress.
ff
mp
f
p
71
mp
cresc.


f
dim.
p
72
Poco più mosso
mf
con brio
II
f
poco rit.
73
Tempo I
f
f
74
Poco più mosso
f
f
75
f con brio
I
restez
ff
mp
cresc.
76
Fl.,Ob.,Cl.
ff


(senza rit.)
T-ha
77 CODA
f con brio
talon
mp
IV
cresc.
78
f
mp
f
mp
cresc.
79
f
mp
f
mp
f
mp
503



503

Gulli is a handsome man, unmistakably Italian. He speaks English fluently with a slight accent, in a cultivated, musical voice—a man of profound sincerity of purpose.

Franco Gulli

Franco Gulli was born in Trieste, Italy, in 1926. He first began study at the age of five with his father, also named Franco, who had been a pupil of Sevcik and Marak at the Prague Conservatory. Gulli considers his father to have been his major teacher. He also studied with the well-known violinist, Arrigo Serato, and graduated from the Trieste Conservatory of Music in 1944. Later, in his adult years, Gulli worked under Joseph Szigeti. Early in his career he became concertmaster of the Milan Chamber Orchestra. Gulli also formed the Trio Italiana d'Archi, which concertized for some 15 years and recorded for Deutsche Grammophon Records.

Gulli has toured as soloist with the Virtuosi di Roma and the Orchestra San Pietro of Naples in the United States and Canada, and with major European orchestras under such noted conductors as Kubelik, Rodzinski, van Otterloo, Scherchen, Fricsay and Desormière. He is a familiar figure as soloist in prestigious European Music festivals, and gave two performances in Genoa's International Festival, playing the legendary Paganini Guarnerius. The violinist has made numerous solo and sonata recordings, including the complete Beethoven Violin-Piano Sonatas with Enrica Cavallo (his wife), currently released by Musical Heritage Society. The magnificent Gulli recording of the reconstituted Paganini Concerto No. 5 brought him instantaneous renown among American professional violinists and knowledgeable violin fanciers, following its release in the United States.

The Gullis have performed extensively as a team since 1947; their repertoire encompasses the entire duo literature, and they have premiered duo concertos by Abbado, Mortari and Testi.

Gulli is also a violin pedagogue, and has held master classes at the Academy Siena from 1964 until he came to the University of Indiana School of Music in 1972, where both he and Cavalli are members of the teaching staff. Both Gullis continue to concertize, separately, and as a duo.

Our discussions with Franco Gulli encompassed two lengthy sessions—first in his studio at the University of Indiana in Bloomington, later at the elegant seaside home of Dr. Herbert Axelrod in Deal, New Jersey.

Gulli is a handsome man who bears more than a casual resemblance to the conductor, Carlo Maria Guilini. His mannerisms and gestures are unmistakeably Italian; he speaks English

fluently with a slight accent, in a cultivated, musical voice—a man of profound sincerity of purpose; intense of nature, but withal, a courtly gentleman of the old world. Affectation plays no role whatsoever, either in his person or his art.

"Mr. Gulli", we began. "Would you please tell us something about your childhood years as a violinist?"

"Certainly. My father gave me a small violin when I was exactly five, September 1, 1931. He was of inestimable help to me in my early studies. Each day, without fail, he would practice with me for an hour. I was so lucky! Thanks to my father, I never practiced the wrong way, so that even though I practiced no more than one hour daily until I was about eight, I was able to achieve much more than the average talented child who struggles by himself between lessons, and falls into all sorts of bad habits. I actually enjoyed practicing at that time. It never interfered with my regular daily schedule at school, and I even had time to play soccer."

"Do you remember your debut recital?"

"Yes. I had become something of a prodigy, and when I was about eight, I played the G-minor Concerto by Vivaldi with a string orchestra conducted by my father, and a group of virtuoso pieces. I was only nine when I played the Bach 'Chaconne' in public for the first time. By the time I was 10 or 11, I started to play music of Paganini. Somehow, at that time, it was surprisingly easy for me, but now, I find it much more difficult. Naturally, by then I was practicing three to four hours a day."

"Did you actually develop a career as a prodigy?"

"Yes, but only for a short time, until I was 15 or 16. Then the war interrupted my budding career. When Trieste became a German province, I stopped playing. But you know, this interruption may have been a blessing in disguise, because playing the violin came so easily to me in those years. I had already begun to play a bit like a Gypsy. When I started again, after the war, I had matured intellectually. To the point where I really began to think critically about how I was playing."

"Was the transitional period from youthful prodigy to mature musical awareness difficult for you?"

"Yes. This is a dangerous time in the life of any prodigy, and many of them founder along the wayside and are never heard from again—at least in the realm of major artists. Once the prodigy

Gulli with his mother, father and sister, circa 1938. Note the exceptional similarity in the right arm position of father and son.

becomes aware of the problems confronting the mature artist, and begins to think, musically, in a disciplined, organized fashion, he often tries to become a scholar, in the most academic sense of the word, and plays mechanically. He tends to become frightened of his own honest emotions and tries to stifle them. He begins to play without the vital elements of sensitivity and what we like to refer to as 'soul'. Only the chosen few who are able to reconcile these contradictions can survive the leap from prodigy to full-fledged artist."

"What advice would you give to the gifted pupil?"

"There are, of course, many things. To the student who is already playing at the second level, not a beginner—I would encourage him to develop a sentimental, emotional attitude toward the music, as well as to ask himself every day, 'what can I do for the music'. This dual approach helps to create a balance between the elements of spontaneity and scholarship."

"With your own hectic schedule, how do you keep your technique in shape?"

"For any performing artist, being able to negotiate the notes with precision and flexibility is of prime importance. In my case, I follow the example of Heifetz. If I have only half an hour for preparation work, I don't practice pieces of music. I try to keep my nerves and muscles in prime playing condition by practicing only simple exercises in a rather slow tempo, maintaining complete mental control over everything—even the most minute details."

"What are some of these simple exercises?"

"Well, for instance, I work at Sevcik, Opus 1, in the first position."

"Do you mean to say that you do not start off with scales?"

At the age of 12, Franco Gulli played the Bruch Concerto and followed it with the* Chaconne *of Bach in his home town of Trieste, Italy.

Above: Discussing fingerings with Leonid Kogan in Brussels, 1971. Below: In 1957, Gulli played the Paganini* D Major Concerto *with Sergio Celibidache.

"No. I feel it is useless to begin the working day with scales and arpeggios. They are too difficult for this specific purpose and involve too many different programs."

"How about the right arm?"

"Once my left hand is properly warmed up, I concentrate on the right arm by working on one of the fast movements from a Bach Solo Partita. I believe in the old adage of 'killing two birds with one stone'. By applying technical work directly to the music after the initial warmup period, we can actually learn the music and increase confidence in the right arm, thus saving precious time."

"Please tell us your impression of Joseph Szigeti."

"In about 1960, after many years of concertizing as a soloist and chamber music performer, I started a long period of study and an intimate musical relationship with Szigeti. I consider him the greatest teacher I ever had, after my father. In fact, Szigeti did much more than merely teach me, in the academic sense of the word. He changed my entire attitude toward music—for which I shall forever be grateful to him."

"Since you were already an experienced and highly accomplished virtuoso, what did he do for you?"

"He brought me into the modern era, not only in repertoire, but in terms of new and more lofty musical standards. I consider Szigeti as the most modern of our generation of violinists. You see, he was a man who strove to make music—and only music. Egoism and what is sometimes called 'the cult of the personality', played no part in his musical interpretations. As you know, he is responsible for inspiring and performing a large number of new works. His 1927 recording of the Brahms Concerto, his Beethoven Concerto with Bruno Walter and Prokofiev Concerto No. 1 recordings are still exciting to hear. I consider that I matured greatly under his guidance. Throughout his extraordinary career, he never ceased to play in a uniquely interesting manner, even when he was so ill the bones of his fingers almost seemed to be protruding from the skin.

Gulli with his daughter, Donatella, after Gulli's debut at La Scala, Milano. Donatella is now a highly qualified flautist in Milano.

Even when he suffered from Parkinson's disease, and his vibrato was too wide and his bow, shaky, his intonation was still accurate. Since my association with him, the music has always come first, and myself, second."

Gulli's recordings of masterworks are proof positive that he 'practices what he preaches' in this regard. We asked, "how do you approach practicing a complicated phrase?"

"I always remember the advice of Casals," he replied. "A very gifted young cellist was playing the Dvorak Concerto at a Casals master class I once visited, and playing beautifully, technically speaking, except for one difficult passage. He asked Casals what he should do to solve the problem. Casals instructed him to forget the technical aspects of the passage, temporarily, and concentrate wholly on how the phrase should sound, musically. Only after that, said Casals, should he again work on the technical details. You see, very often a pupil wastes valuable time practicing slowly on a difficult passage, especially in working on intonation, without regard to how the passage must be viewed in relation to the rest of the composition in actual performance. Like Casals, I recommend that this procedure be reversed."

We asked Gulli his opinions concerning repertoire. "Choice of repertoire is most important these days. In my own travels around the world, I find that artists keep playing the same music, the same concertos. There is an unfortunate lack of interest, not only in contemporary music, but also in little-played worthy music of the past. I have noticed that programs which were acceptable to the public 25 years ago no longer interest people. For instance, I do not believe that the public cares for a sequence of short virtuoso pieces. However, at last, younger violinists are beginning to play works from the vast sonata repertoire, and this trend pleases me."

"Do you really think audiences are more sophisticated today?"

"Definitely. And I think that performance standards are higher, both technically and musically, due in large part to the opportunity we have to hear and compare performances from the tremendous recording reservoir that is now available to us."

Gulli had already told us how he maintains his technique when his time is limited, but we wanted to learn about his intimate practice secrets. We asked.

"Let me tell you what I do when I have, say, three hours to

"I spend a few minutes with Sevcik Opus 1, Book 1, exercises 5 and 13. I do this daily, like drinking my morning coffee."

practice during the day. First, as I mentioned before, I spend a few minutes with Sevcik Opus 1, Book 1, exercises 5 and 13. I do this daily, like drinking my morning coffee. You might think this is boring, but when one realizes the benefits these exercises offer, to me, they are not at all boring. I concentrate carefully on all the intervals between the fingers without dwelling too long on any one particular interval. And I take care never to over-stretch my natural physical limits.

"Exercises must always be approached in a cognitive manner. One must strive to avoid making any incorrect movements with the muscles and nerves. And the brain must be given sufficient time to ascertain whether or not the intonation is pure. Imperfect exercise practice can solidify and worsen intonation that is not clean. Sometimes a metronome can be helpful if not used for too long a period. I am convinced that if one practices slowly and correctly, speed will develop gradually. There is no other way that I know to evolve a first class technique."

"What do you do when your fingers get tired?"

"I never force any muscle that is tired. Instead, I immediately switch to specialized right arm training. I will play simple scales détaché or spiccato, repeating each note first eight times, then four, then in triplets, both down-bow and up-bow, then in doublets. Next, I practice the scale legato."

"All that must take at least an hour."

"No, it does not. The process is not a question of practicing long, but of practicing with the utmost critical care! And again I stress, if the muscles become fatigued, the player should stop instantly; let the arm drop and give the blood a chance to circulate."

"What else do you practice?"

"I work at Paganini Caprices, preferably those Caprices which can be considered more as an exercise than a viable musical piece. For example—No. 5. This is a fantastic vehicle for coordinating the movements of the left hand and right arm. Then I practice No. 6 in which the left hand is more important. Sometimes instead of Paganini, I take an étude of Wieniawski. They also present extraordinary technical problems, and contain a wide diversity of selection."

"What about the vibrato? What would you do, for instance, with a student who had a poor or over-tense vibrato?"

Franco and Enrica Cavallo (his wife) after a performance of the complete cycle of Beethoven sonatas in Parma, Italy, 1976.

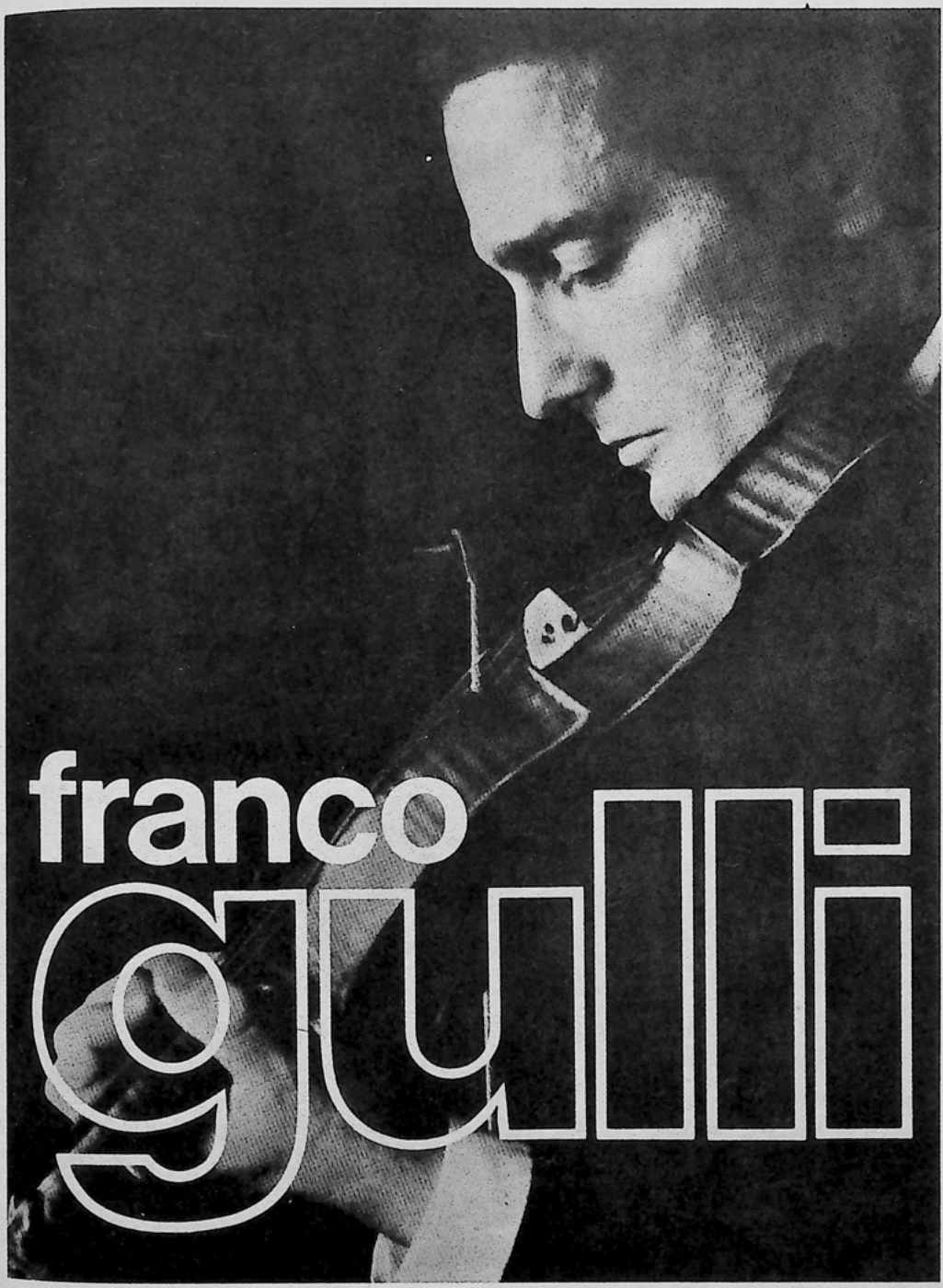
"If someone has played constantly for many years with a bad vibrato, it is extremely difficult to rectify, perhaps even impossible. Of course, I would try to examine the problem physiologically. There are, or should be, different types and speeds of vibrato used by every violinist of high quality. The best advice I can give is that the student should try to vibrate toward the side of the violin, rather than toward the bridge. But don't ask me exactly how to teach this technique! I believe in many types of vibrato—one kind for Schubert, another for Bach, another for Tchaikovsky and so on. I think the player should hypothetically ask each individual composer what type and combinations of vibrato he would like."

"What are your thoughts about the relationship between a violinist's type and usage of his vibrato and his personality?"

"They are, of course, very closely related. But since you bring up the question of personality in performance, I would like to make my position clear. You see, it is vital that the artist blend his own personality with that of the composer he is performing. However, when his personality overshadows that of the composer, that is not good. In fact, when I turn on my radio and can instantly recognize a violinist after a bar or two, I feel that the composer is somehow being downgraded in favor of the violinist's individuality. In my opinion, this is wrong. A few weeks ago I played the Brahms Concerto in Washington under Rostropovich. We had breakfast together before the rehearsal and he expressed the very same point of view."

We thought the latter statement was rather surprising, considering the overwhelming impact of Rostropovich's personality upon

Translating for Leonid Kogan a note from Antoine Ysaÿe, the son of the great Eugene Ysaye. Brussels, 1976



Columbia Artists' brochure cover on Gulli.

"Exercises must always be approached in a cognitive manner. One must strive to avoid making any incorrect movements with the muscles and nerves." After being very philosophical (facing page), Gulli is quick to pick up his violin (above) and demonstrate a point.

all of his playing, and elected to continue discussion on the subject. "What do you think, for example, about Heifetz and his slides and style, which are so easily recognizable?"

"Please, dear friends," Gulli replied. "When we speak of Heifetz, we are talking about a God of the violin. Let us remember that when he initiated his style of playing more than 60 years ago, he was the first to do as he did. But with all the veneration I have for him, we cannot conclude that everything he did must necessarily be considered as a model for all time. Heifetz's personality is indelibly stamped on the music of every composer he plays. Practically all of the older generation players except Szigeti, overshadowed the music, to greater or lesser degree, with their individual personality. Heifetz was absolutely unique, but his way of playing strongly influenced a vast number of would-be imitators who could never really emulate his towering accomplishments, to their great disadvantage. I think this was most unfortunate."

"Do you think this trend has materially changed, today?"

"Yes. Today there is practically no important violinist who uses the music as a vehicle merely to emphasize his own personality. Modern audiences go to concerts primarily to listen to the music, and I believe that the artist's primary responsibility is to try to recreate what the composer had in his mind and soul. The music of each composer must be played in a different manner. I admit this is no simple task. One should not play Drigo's 'Serenade' in the same manner as he plays a Bach 'Allemande' ".

"To what do you attribute the fact that many of the more purely violinistic works are no longer played?"

"I feel they are of tremendous importance, instrumentally speaking. But I do not think their value is high on the musical level. Again, I repeat—audiences are not so naive as some people think. For example, when I was young, I played the Ernst Concerto. It was lots of fun for me. In those days, my fingers seemed to fly of their own volition. Later, I re-studied the Ernst for pedagogical reasons, simply to teach it. Some students with special technical problems can profit from studying such a work. Violinistically, it is a gorgeous piece, but musically it is junk. Perhaps that is why modern audiences do not accept it."

"Do you think works by Ernst, Joachim, Vieuxtemps and Sarasate will ever come back into vogue?"

Gulli and David Oistrakh were among the jurors at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, 1971.

"It's hard to say. And I think we must make some distinctions. I consider Vieuxtemps, and of course, Paganini, to be fine composers whose music is valid for audiences of today, particularly when the technical aspects are subordinated to the totality of the music."

"Do you really believe audiences are interested in the musicality of complex contemporary works?"

"I can only cite my own experience. I remember, shortly after World War II, when, for the first time, my wife and I performed such works as Schoenberg's 'Fantasy' and Sonatas of Prokofiev and Hindemith, our reception by audiences was excellent. I have come to believe that selecting a program that 'plays down' to the audience, in the hope of winning easy applause, is a mistake, these days."

Gulli's points were well taken and represented a view that presently seems to be in the majority. Unfortunately, this opinion cannot explain or account for the current sharp decline of audience interest in, and attendance at violin recitals. We asked about Gulli's instruments.

"Since 1975 I have played a violin made expressly for me by Serge Peresson of Haddonfield, New Jersey. I love it, and play it everywhere. I also own a 1742 J.B. Guadagnini made in Piacenza, and I have permanent access to two wonderful Strads, ex-Oistrakh, 1702, and ex-Von Vecsey, 1716. But at present I prefer to play the Peresson. My favorite bows are my Domenic Peccatte and my Charles Peccatte."

Gulli with cellist Andre Navarra. They had a very intimate discussion about the Brahms **Concerto for Cello and Violin,** ***Siena, Italy, 1970.***

Gulli with his wife, Enrica Cavallo, at their home in Milano, Italy. 1970.

"Do you practice before a concert?"

"Oh yes! If I have only a half hour during the day, I devote it to the simplest possible elements, practicing everything very slowly, so as to get the fullest control over my intonation, bow arm, and nerves. And when I am performing a virtuoso work, such as a Paganini Concerto, I require more time. I have found that playing Bach is very good for steadying the right arm and left-hand fingers in preparation for playing Paganini. Once, when I was to perform the Paganini B-minor Concerto in Carnegie Hall, I prepared by playing the entire Bach Solo D-minor Partita, including the Chaconne."

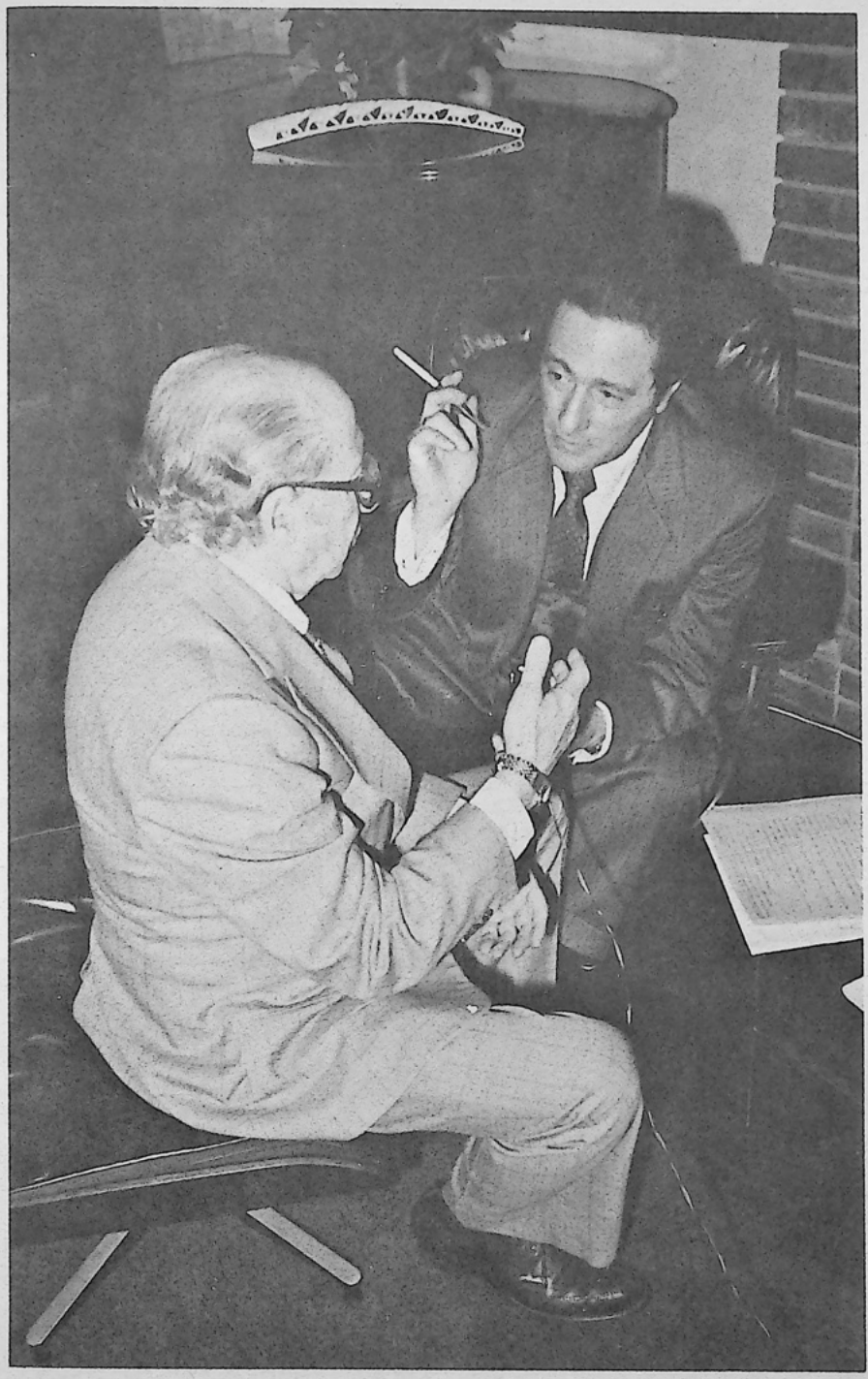
"Does the size of an audience affect your ability to perform?"

"Not to a great degree. But, oddly, I seem to play better in such great cities as London or New York rather than small towns. I cannot explain why. I recall when I made my debut at La Scala in Milan, in 1957, which is a very famous theatre, I was extremely calm, and played well, I believe. A few days later I gave a recital in a small town where I had played many times before, and was quite bothered with nervousness. Audiences in large cities, where there is an established performance tradition, seem to be more sympathetic to the problems of the artist onstage."

"How do you compare the calibre of American critics with critics in Italy?"

"I don't know. I have not read newspaper criticism for the past 15 years. You see, if they are good, it doesn't make any difference, and if they are bad, they only upset you. I am convinced that if an

The pause that refreshes. During a break in a chamber music rehearsal with Menahem Pressler, William Primrose and Janos Starker in Bloomington, Indiana, 1971.



". . . let me emphasize that concentration is the key element in memorizing."

artist is worthy, he will make a career, regardless of good or bad criticisms."

"Could you tell us of some performances that had extraordinary personal meaning for you?"

Gulli thought for a moment. "Yes," he said, "I can think of two performances in particular. One was the first time I played the Schumann Violin Concerto. It was with Rafael Kubelik conducting in 1948. He told me that the Schumann had been the last thing he played with his father, Jan, shortly before his death. This knowledge, coupled with the event itself, made it one of the most exciting musical experiences of my life."

"And the other?" we asked.

"The other event was supremely emotional. It was in 1945, when I was about 19, after the war finally ended. Because of the German occupation, we had not been allowed to play or hear the so-called 'degenerate' music of Mendelssohn, Bloch, Prokofiev and others. Many of my friends had just returned from concentration camps or prison. The rest of us had been in an intellectual jail. I performed again for the first time in my home town. When I played Bloch's "Baal Shem," it was like a monumental cry of freedom that made me feel the true meaning of freedom, to a degree that shook me to the very roots of my being."

"Do you memorize instinctively or analytically?"

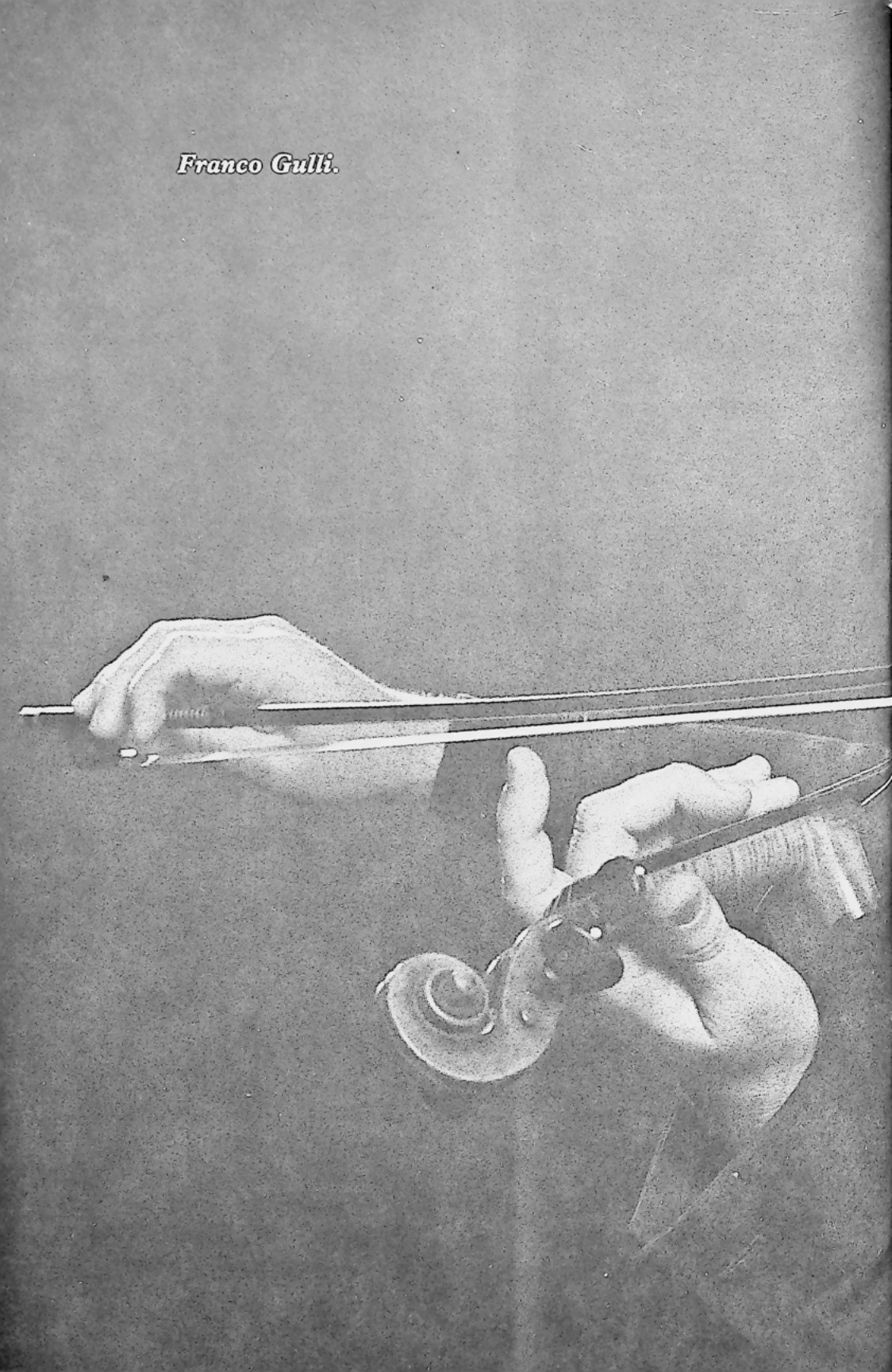
"Both. But let me emphasize that concentration is a key element in memorizing. Recently I had occasion to perform the Brahms Concerto four times. Then I played it in Washington, and for no reason whatsoever, I had a memory lapse for a few bars in the first movement."

"Why do you think that happened to a highly experienced artist like yourself?"

"Sheer lack of concentration. Yes, I was thinking of the music, but not of what I was doing at that particular moment. This is one of the worst mistakes a performer can make, and it has happened to many violinists, including myself. In this instance, I had no excuse. The hall, the acoustics, the conductor, the orchestra were all excellent. I was feeling very comfortable right up to the instant of the mishap. Ah yes—concentration," he repeated.

"Aside from concentration, what advice would you give a pupil for help in memorizing?"

Applebaum agrees with Gulli on the Peresson. They are extremely well made and are used by many artists including Menuhin and Fodor. Unfortunately Peresson has sold out his production for the rest of his life with orders from performing artists and is not taking any more.


Franco Gulli.

"Since 1975 I have played a violin made expressly for me by Serge Peresson of Haddonfield, New Jersey. I love it, and play it everywhere."

"I'm afraid I could not be specific. Each player has his own system of memorizing. There have been books written about the scientific approach to memorizing, but I could not vouch for their dependability.

"One of the most powerful factors in memorizing is the habit patterns formed by the fingers from constant practice. But this can have its drawbacks, especially when one re-studies, as an adult, a work mastered technically in his youth. For example—I played the Dvorak Concerto many times as a teenage prodigy. Twenty years later, I took it up again. Naturally, in the interim, I had made considerable changes in my technical application, and my musical tastes and values had greatly matured. When I played it again, for the first time as an adult, I found myself in difficulty because many of the old childhood finger patterns were still in force. It is in-

teresting to note that often the fingers remember better than the brain."

"Let us ask you a question about a subject that is widely debated among violinists. How do you feel about the position of the left thumb?"

"For myself, I prefer a backward position of the thumb, rather behind the hand. Even though every hand is different, I think it should be a cardinal rule that the other fingers be as close to the strings as possible, in all positions."

"Do you prefer an elongated position of the fingers in the highest registers, or a more square position?"

"Elongated, by all means. I feel that this helps the intonation. I try to change greatly the angle of my fingers as I go up the fingerboard. Incidentally, whenever possible in technical passages in the high positions, I prefer the non-traditional combinations of the first, second and fourth finger rather than first, third and fourth."

"Do you ever invent exercises to give your students, or do you advocate that they invent their own to aid in solving personal technical problems?"

"No. I think we can find everything we need in Sevcik, together with the scale systems of Flesch and Galamian. However, I do suggest that in notes of vibrant intensity, particularly in the high positions, the third finger be used instead of the fourth. Not only is the third finger stronger, but it can produce a better, more vibrant sound because the pad is meatier and covers a larger area of the string."

"What type of editions of the masterworks do you select for your own practice and performance, and those of your students?"

"I always prefer original editions or those editions closest to the original. Nowadays we have access to microfilm and xerox copies of the original texts. Take Bach, for instance, so much of his music has been tainted by editors with their own individualistic ideas. After all," Gulli smiled, "if we are going to make mistakes, I think it is better that we make our own and not those of some editor, especially a Romantic-leaning 19th century editor. For the Bach Solo Sonatas, I use the Barenreiter edition."

"And how about the Mozart Concertos?"

Again, I use the Barenreiter edition for numbers 3 in G-major and 5 in A-major, without fingering and bowings, so that I am free

Gulli tested a Strad, a del Gesu and a Peresson. He used the authors and other guests as judges. The Peresson won!

to devise my own according to my tastes and understanding of the composer, and without having the pages cluttered up by someone else's ideas. Sometimes, though, in the other concertos, I use the Breitkopf-Hartel edition, which is not quite as accurate as the Barenreiter, but still very good."

"Do you think there is any value at all in looking over the various editions, say of the Bach Solo Sonatas, prepared by other artists and pedagogues?"

"Yes. I think this can help to stimulate the student's thinking. After all some of these editions, particularly in recent years, have been concocted by excellent musicians. No two violinists in the world have exactly the same conception of the Bach Solo Sonatas, either musically or technically, so there is endless opportunity for experimentation and constant re-analysis of the music."

Gulli had previously consented to present some of his analytical views on the subject of Bach's monumental *Chaconne* from the Solo Partita No. 2 in D-minor.

"The *Chaconne,*" he began, "is actually a form of Spanish dance, slow and very courtly, dating back hundreds of years, and it is important that the performing violinist see it in that light. And since it is a dance form, rhythm must play a vital role in its interpretation. Throughout the course of the work, certain changes in tempo are permissible, but the element of rhythm should be constantly asserted. And it should be understood that the basic impulse of the *Chaconne* theme rhythm is on the second beat."

"Do you feel that each chord in the very opening bars which is followed by repeated thematic notes should be played as a chord?"

"I know that some artists repeat it as a chord, others, as a single note. The point is, I think, whichever pattern is initiated in the first bar should be sustained wherever this occurs."

"Do you prefer the chords to be played rather long, or shorter?"

"I don't think they should be held too long, because you must remember that in Bach's time the bows used were not long."

"Is there any cardinal rule that you would apply to the length of notes, apart from their printed denomination?"

"Yes. In order to emphasize the Baroque style of the work, I advocate that short notes should be played a little on the short side, and long notes, a bit longer. These rhythmic extremes lend added

character to the overall interpretation. Another thing—it is important that we adopt ornamental usages that were common practice in Bach's time, such as adding a trill in a cadenza-type passage, even if it is not written in the music."

"What about the use of slurred notes as differentiated from separate bows?"

"I think Bach was a good enough violinist to know where he wanted either legato or separate bows, and marked them accordingly, though I admit that one should not follow this procedure in a mechanical way. We should slur those notes to which we do not want to give importance, and play separately those notes we want to be prominent. The type of bowing selected by the performer is intimately related to the phrasing."

"Could you give us a specific example of bowing selection?" Gulli examined the music. "Let us look at bar 29," he said. "Here we have seven sixteenth notes on the second and third beats of the bar which should be slurred, with the final sixteenth note played separately as a sort of lead note to the following bar. This sixteenth note can be played in the same bow as the preceding slurred notes, articulated separately. If it were played as a separate down bow it might come out too strong. All too often we employ bowings that are comfortable, but not in keeping with the spirit of the original text."

"Would you play bar 33 all separate bows?"

"Yes. You see, when I play bars 33, 34 and 35, I think of a harpsichord with two manuals. My right arm is one manual, my left, the other, and I use both in each measure."

"In general, how do you differentiate between variation?"

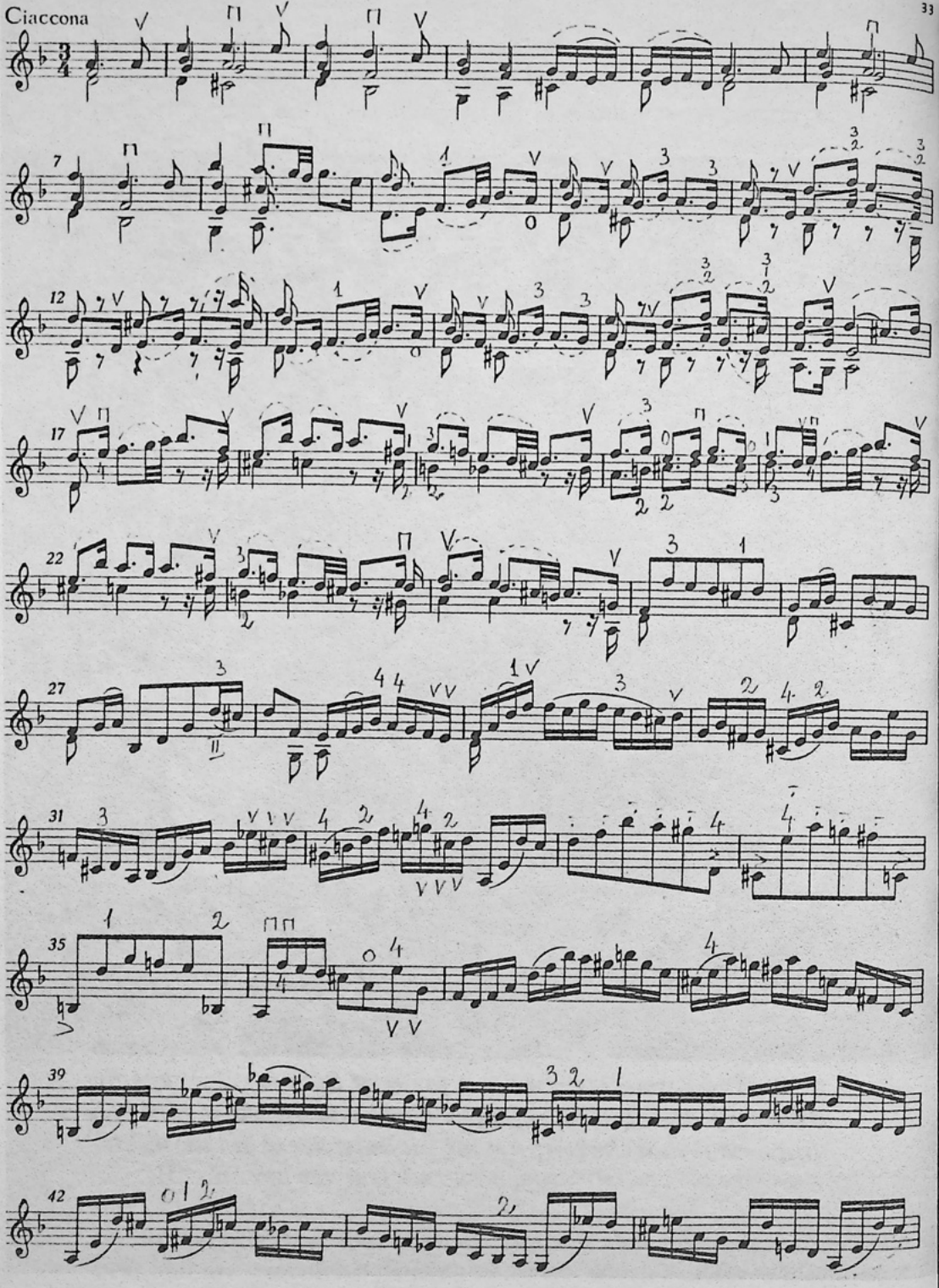
"I strive consistently to create contrast. If one variation stresses lyricism, I apply accentuated bowings, such as Martelé, to the following variation—that is, of course, if this is suitable to the essential musical line and phrasing. One cannot unthinkingly alter the continuity of the music, but such a work as the *Chaconne* demands as much contrast as the player can produce, within the limitations set by the music. This is a colossal challenge!"

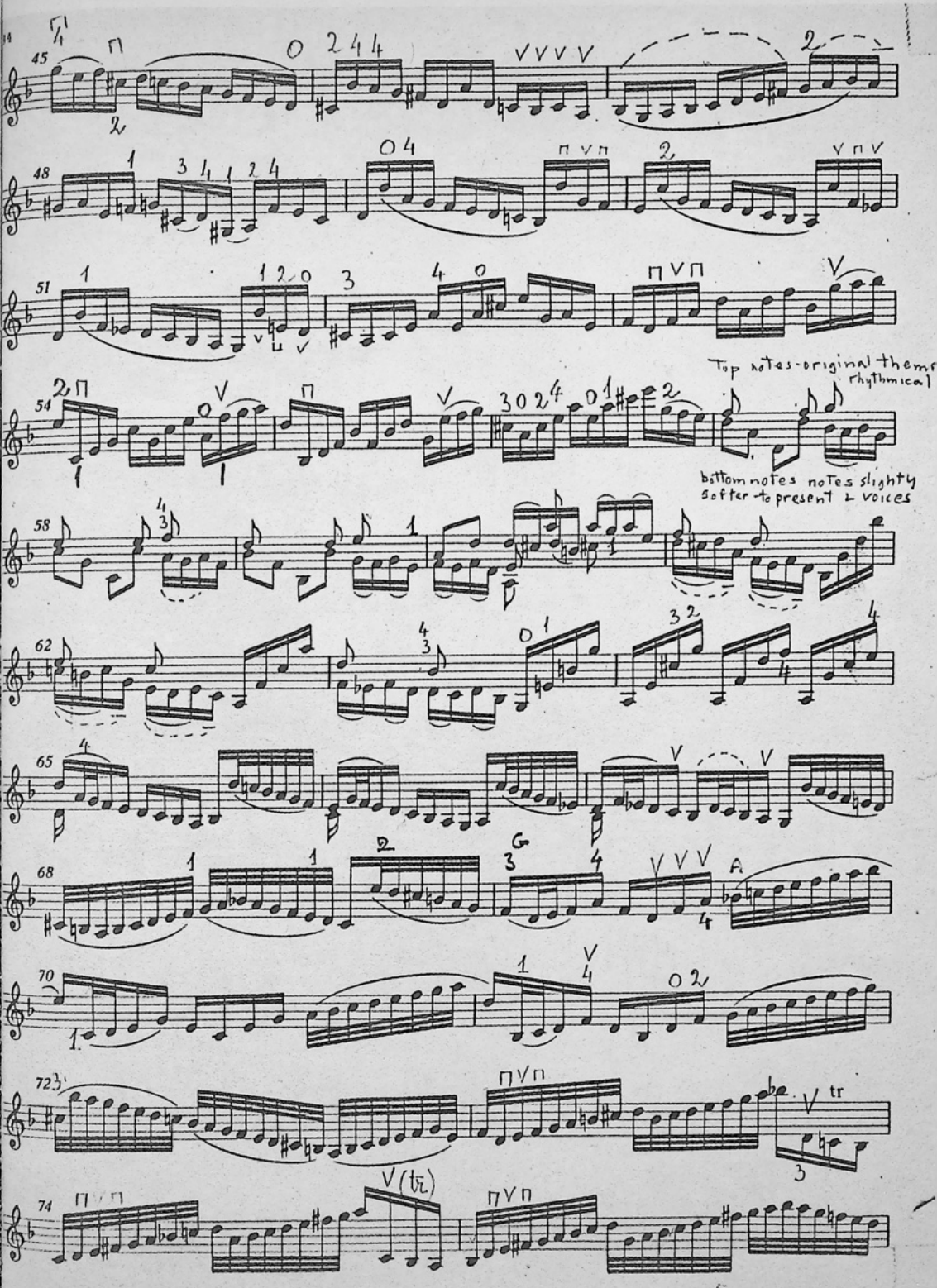
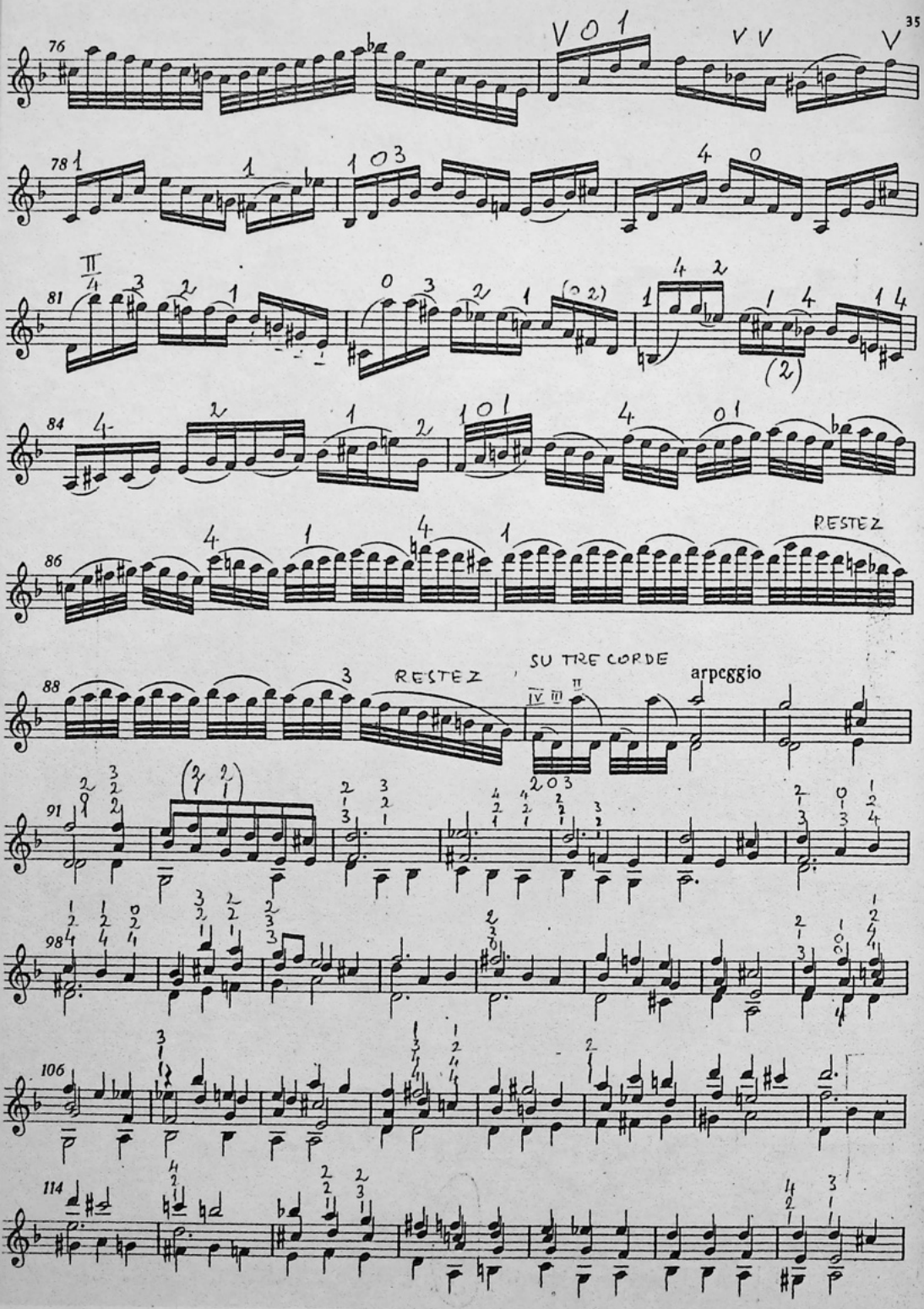
"How do you envision the modal properties and changes starting with bar 57?"

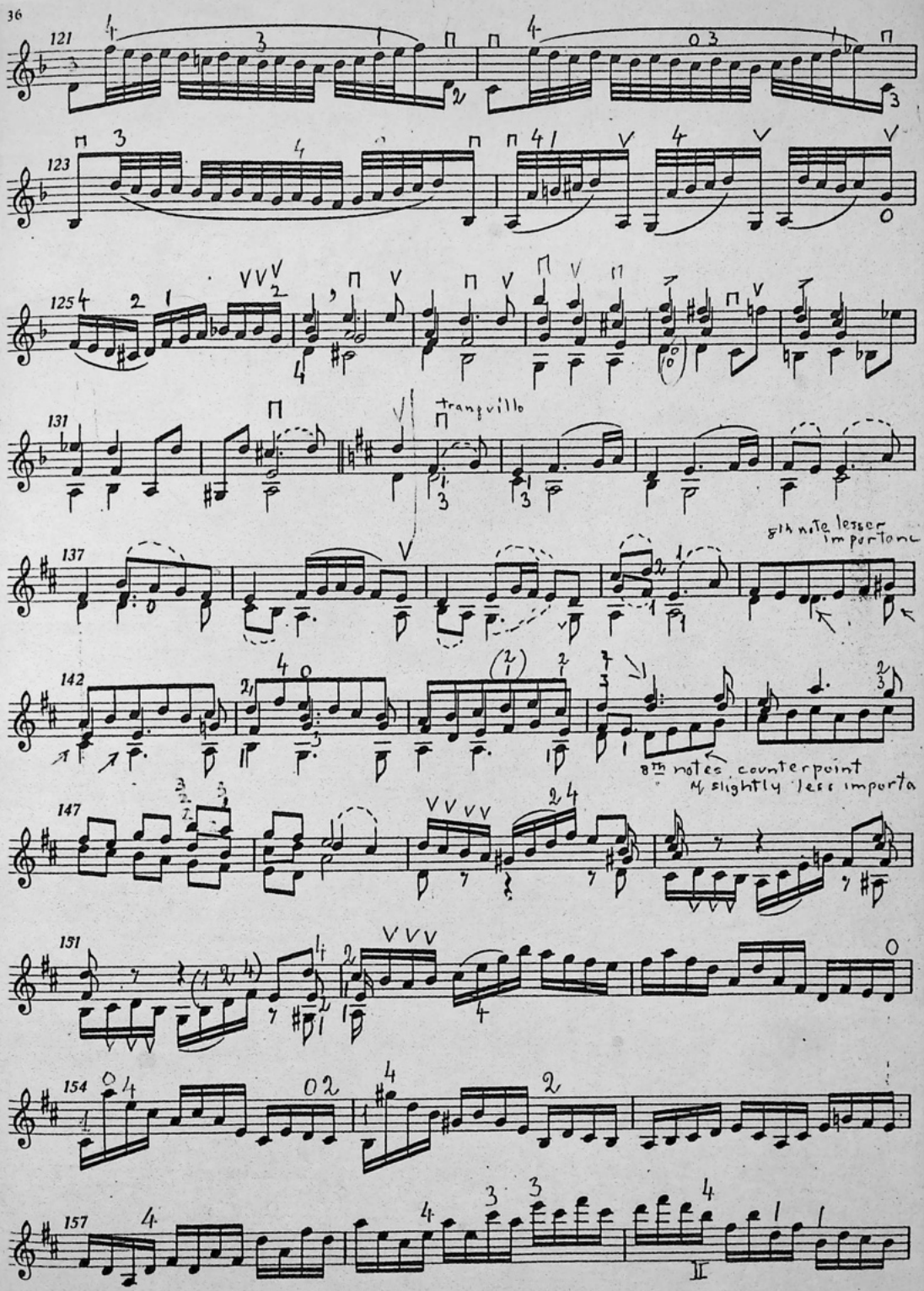
"At 57, the first four bars are exultant, almost haughty; the next four are transitional, leading to bar 65, which I prefer to play

"The **Chaconne** *is actually a form of Spanish dance, slow and very courtly, dating back hundreds of years, and it is important that the performing violinist see it in that light."*

Ciaccona




Top notes-original theme rhythmical
bottom notes notes slighty softer to present 2 voices

RESTEZ
SU TRE CORDE
arpeggio
RESTEZ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125
131
tranquillo
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5th note lesser importance
142
8th notes counterpoint
slightly less importa
147
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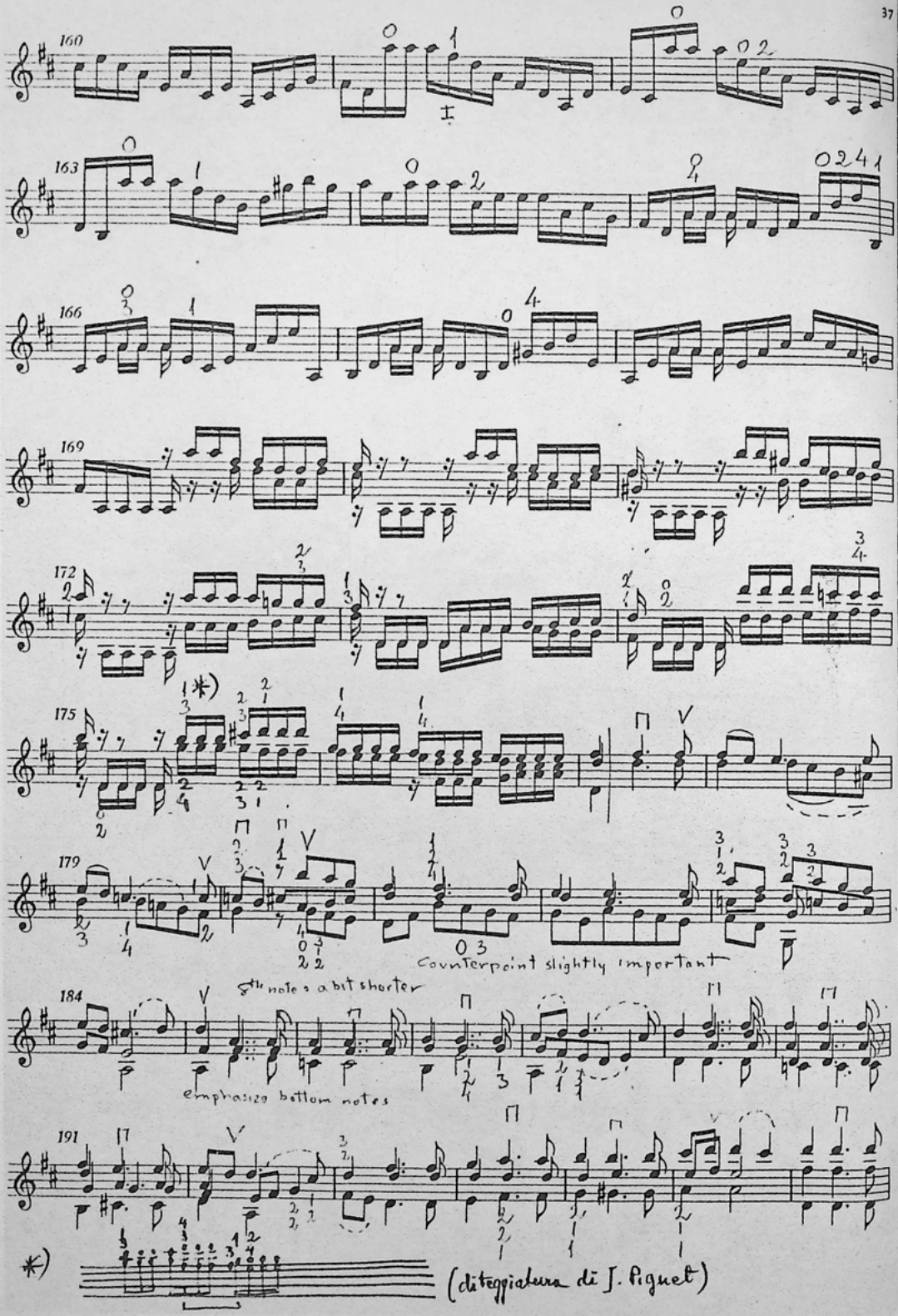
160
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Counterpoint slightly important
184
5th note a bit shorter
emphasize bottom notes
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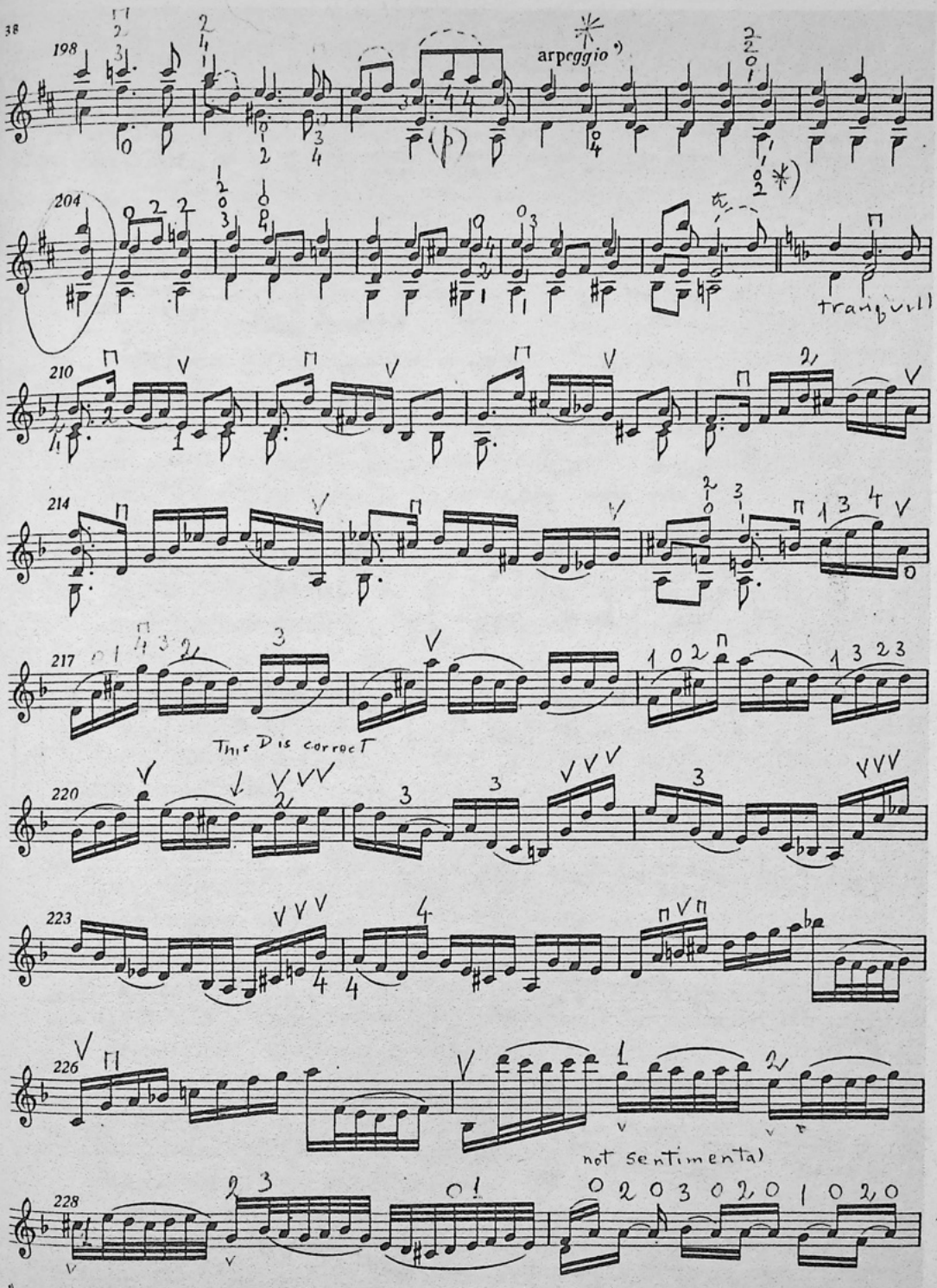
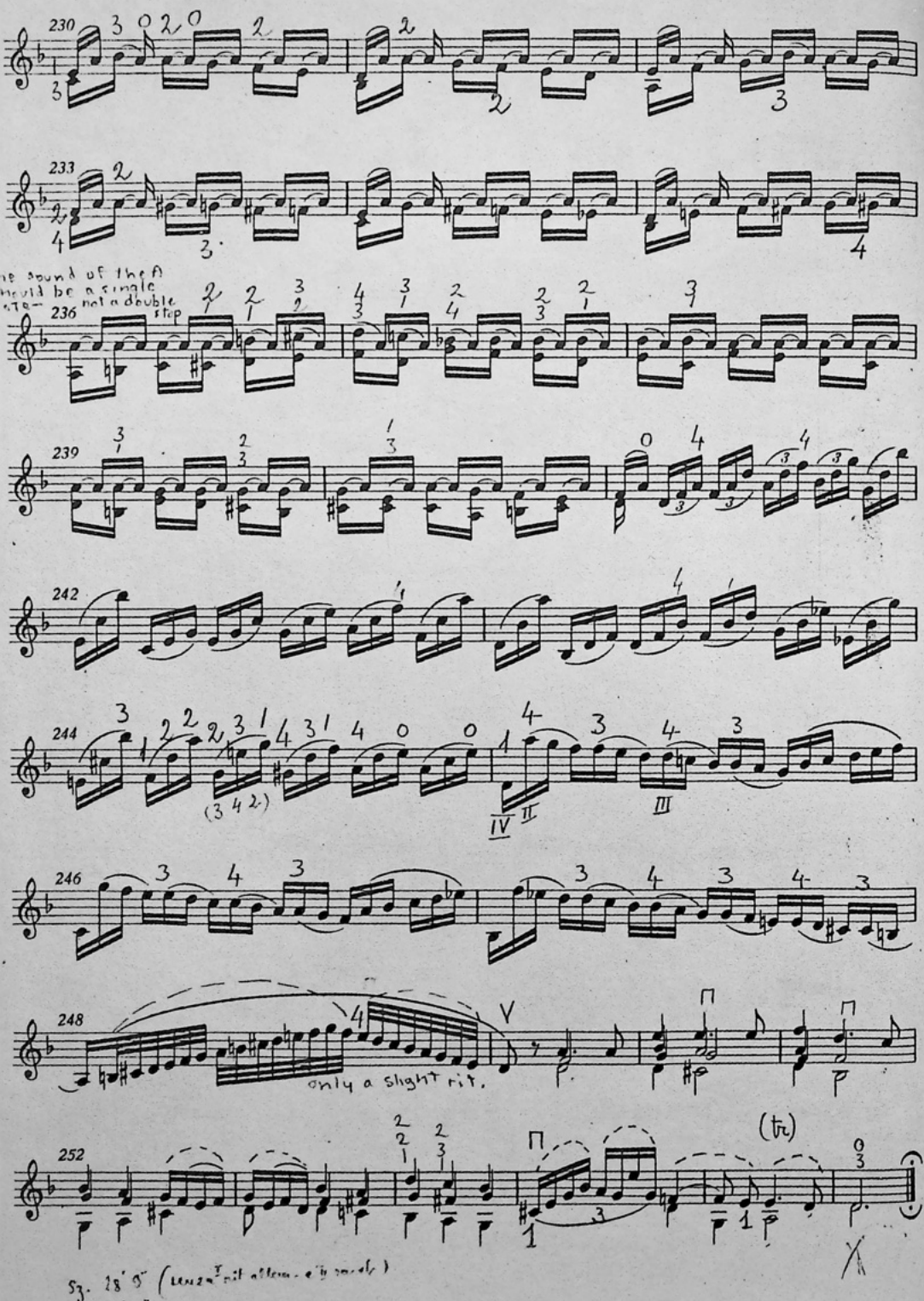
*)
(diteggiatura di J. Piguet)



*) „arpeggio" gehört möglicherweise erst zum zweiten Viertel. - „arpeggio" possibly belongs to the second crotchet.

perhaps a bit louder or softer



piano to avoid an overlong section of similar dynamics. Here I use a sort of subdued Martelé stroke, and when I get to the scale passages, I think of them as small, rapidly surging streams. At bars 77 and 78, the character should be broader and more relaxed."

"How do you handle the last four notes in the quiet section at bar 81?"

"I play them slurred but with a light separation of each note. All this and the ensuing smooth legato passage are a prelude to the next long episode in which Bach simply wrote the chords and captioned them with the word 'arpeggio.' This builds to a climax at bar 113."

"And what about the long legatos starting at bar 121?"

"Here we must be extremely careful not to yield to the temptation of rushing, so that the notes are not 'swallowed'. And I like to play bar 124 in the first position even though it requires that we jump from the G-string to the A-string with the bow. At bars 126 and 127, we should accent only the first beats even though the innate rhythmic dominance is on the second. This protects us against overstressing the second beats."

"We notice that in bar 129 you use the open D and A strings in the chords and not the fourth finger."

"Sometimes I use the fourth finger, but in actual performance in a muggy hall, the open strings are safer."

"What is your conception of the pianissimo section at bar 133?"

"Here Bach has no dynamic indications whatsoever. I feel that the mood should be intimate and somewhat tender, but in no way overtly sentimental.

"From here to the end we encounter many episodes containing problems similar to those we have already discussed. It is the responsibility of the player to seek out and stress the thematic note or notes to the best of his ability, and to fashion his pattern of bowings, fingerings, dynamics and palette of tonal colorings around this principal." Gulli took his violin and played several of the variations to demonstrate his point. We noted that he played his arpeggios in the manner suggested by Bach's original score. When he had finished, he put the violin down and stated—"You know, after all is said and done, there is still the all-important factors of a violinist's sensitivity, his good, or not-so-good taste, and his in-

Gulli demonstrating the sounds of various Cremonese violins for Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod and Samuel Applebaum.

Testing the violins for harmonic reproduction and the effect of using a different bow, Gulli finally takes a break (bottom facing page) and enjoys coffee with his wife, Dr. Stella Saslow and Dr. Samuel Applebaum.

stinctive ability to read and discover what lies 'between the lines' in the process of trying to create a memorable interpretation."

A succinct summation with which one could whole-heartedly agree. We posed a final question.

"Since, among many other extraordinary attributes, you are a master performer of Paganini's music, how do you approach the playing of double-harmonics, which, as every violinist knows, is a hazardous, treacherous undertaking? Do you have any special methods for practicing them?"

Gulli's browed creased slightly. He paused before answering. "No," he replied. "I actually do not possess any secrets for practicing or performing double-harmonics. I've always seemed to have an innate ability for playing them.

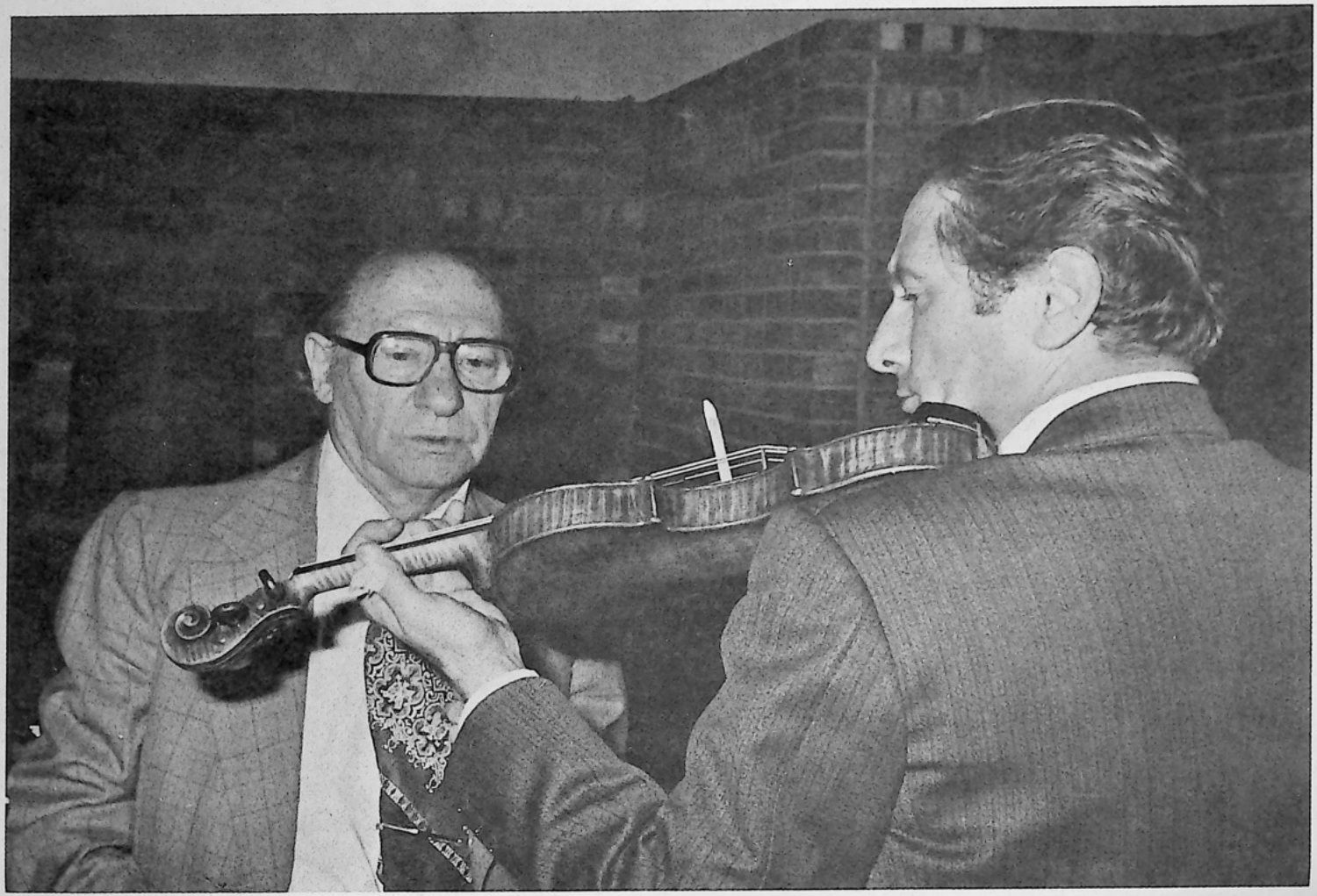
"All I can say is that one must have absolutely perfect intonation of the left hand and be able to 'feel' instinctively, the correct intervals between the fingers. And, of course, being able to exert

Au confrère Franco Gulli
bien cordial souvenir
de la première de F. Martin
Joseph Szigeti
1943

Above: Gulli, with one of the truly great men of the violin, Josef Gingold, "play" a double concerto for two hands, two bows and one fiddle. Facing page: Admiring Joseph Szigeti's Petrus Guarnerius after his premiere of the Frank Martin* Violin Concerto. *Milano, 1963.

exactly the right amount of bow pressure is vital to clarity of sound. Among my students, those who are extremely talented, seem able to produce double-harmonics without too much trouble. As for the less-talented ones," Gulli smiled archly, "I avoid giving them works with double-harmonics."

Gulli's repertoire is exceptionally large and diversified, and his voluminous output of recordings includes concertos by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart Nos. 3, 4, and 5, Paganini No. 5, Tartini (in D and F), a tremendous roster of Vivaldi with chamber orchestra, and three by Alberto Curci, a Neapolitan violinist composer who was a pupil of Joachim. In addition to the complete Beethoven Violin-Piano Sonata cycle, he has disced Sonatas by Franck, Symanowski, Busoni (2), all with Enrica Cavallo, and seven by



Gulli had to remove the bandage from his cut left thumb to demonstrate his interpretation of the Paganini Caprices No. 13 and 20 (see also facing page) for Dr. Samuel Applebaum.

Vivaldi with harpsichord and cello. His Paganini recordings include four Caprices, "I Palpiti," and the spectacular Concerto No. 5.

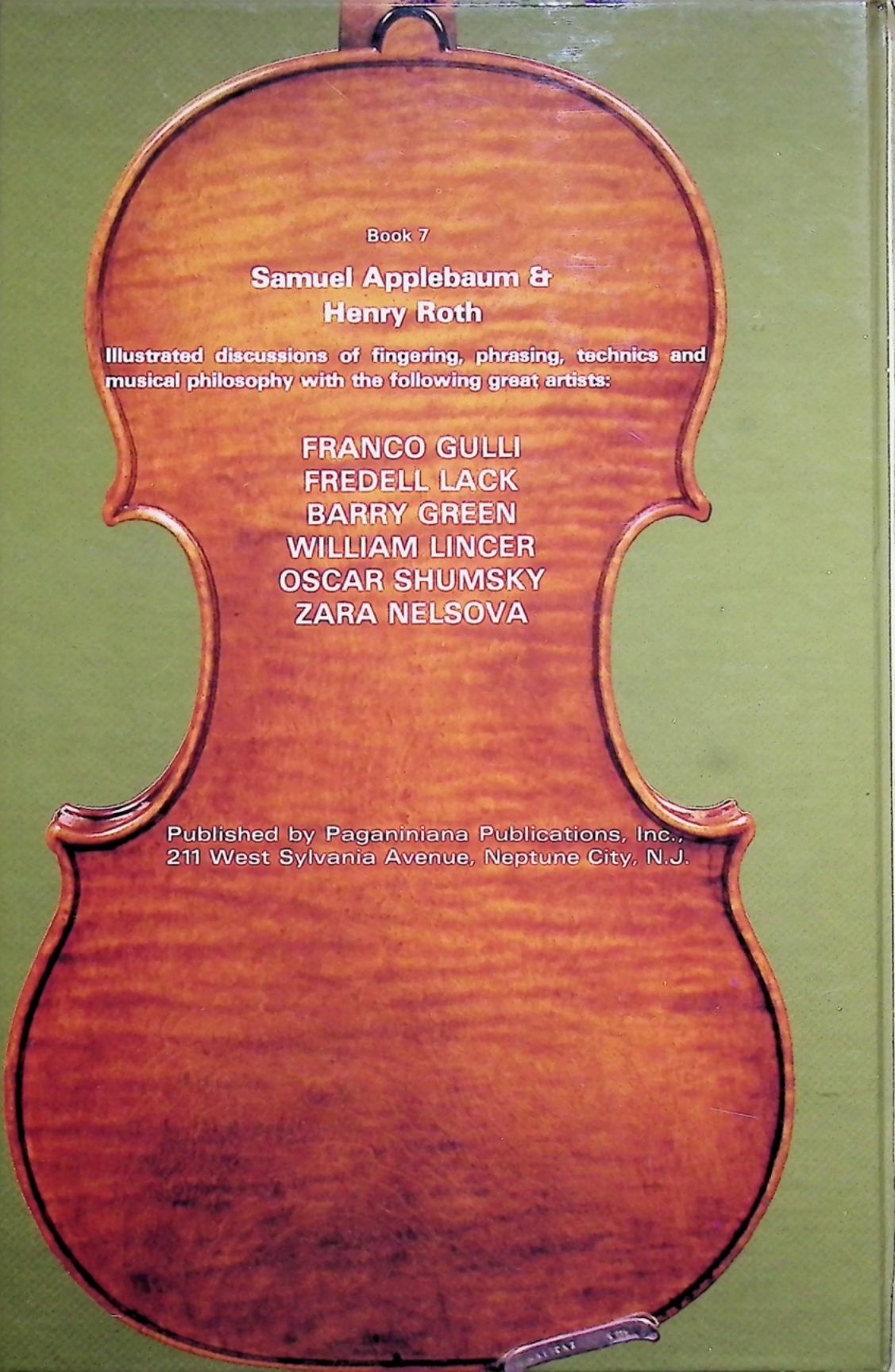
An extraordinary single record by Gulli incorporates stunning performances of Bach's Solo Sonata No. 1 in G-minor, Tartini's "Devil's Trill" Sonata (with the opening lyric sections played in double-stops), Paganini Caprices Nos. 13 and 20, and Vieuxtemps' "Romance." The disc is indeed a 'find' for violin fanciers—immaculate artistry in every violinistic and musical facet.

At this writing, Gulli's career as a solo and chamber music artist and pedagogue continues to advance in full stride as he takes his place among the important violinists of his time.

Cumulative Index of Artists in Books 1-7

	Volume	Page
Aronoff, Max	VI	204
Ashkenasi, Shmuel	II	93
Axelrod, Dr. Herbert R.	II	369
Bednar, Stanley	IV	263
Benny, Jack	IV	303
Bronstein, Rafael	I	332
Casals, Pablo	I	271
Cole, Orlando	I	281
Dalley, John	II	194
DeLay, Dorothy	III	259
Doktor, Paul	I	222
Drew, Lucas	II	307
Eisenberg, Maurice	I	288
Elman, Mischa	I	7
Eto, Toshiya	II	120
Fodor, Eugene	III	23
Fortas, Abe	II	349
Fournier, Pierre	II	285
Francais, Jacques	VI	7
Francescatti, Zino	I	22
Francescatti, Zino	VI	154
Freidman, Erick	V	5
Fuchs, Joseph	I	37
Fuchs, Lillian	II	209
Galamian, Ivan	I	340
Galimir, Felix	VI	87
Garbousova, Raya	III	157
Gingold, Josef	I	352
Gingrich, Arnold	III	201
Glenn, Carroll	I	49
Green, Barry	VII	145
Grodner, Murray	V	240
Gulli, Franco	VII	237
Harth, Sidney	V	113
Heifetz, Jascha	I	61
Heifetz, Jascha	V	227
Hillyer, Raphael	III	133
Karr, Gary	II	319
Katims, Milton	I	233
Kaufman, Louis	I	83
Kogan, Leonid	II	55
Kreeger, David Lloyd	IV	284
Kreisler, Fritz	I	95
Lack, Fredell	VII	185
Laredo, Jaime	II	107
Lim Kek Tjiang	II	25
Lincer, William	VII	113
Luca, Sergiu	IV	242
Manhattan Trio	IV	204
Mensch, Homer R.	II	333
Menuhin, Yehudi	I	110
Milstein, Nathan	I	127
Mischakoff, Mischa	III	103
Moennigs, The (Father and Son)	VI	238
Morini, Erica	I	137
Nelsova, Zara	VII	51
Oistrakh, David	IV	14
Oistrakh, Igor	V	265
Oliveira, Elmar	VI	281
Oliveira, Elmar	VI	309
Pardee, Margaret	III	229
Perlman, Itzak	II	180
Persinger, Louis	I	359
Piatigorsky, Gregor	I	305
Primrose, William	I	243
Rabin, Michael	III	169
Rabinoff, Benno	II	73
Rejto, Gabor	IV	127
Ricci, Ruggiero	I	149

	Volume	Page
Ricci, Ruggiero	V	204
Rosand, Aaron	III	303
Rose, Leonard	I	320
Rostropovich, Mstislav	II	263
Sankey, Stuart	VI	65
Schneider, Alexander	I	162
Shumsky, Oscar	VII	11
Soyer, David	II	291
Spalding, Albert	I	172
Spivakov, Vladimir	V	173
Spivakovsky, Tossy	I	185
Starker, Janos	II	249
Steinhardt, Arnold	II	127
Sunderman, Dr. William	II	361
Szeryng, Henryk	III	69
Szigeti, Joseph	I	198
Tchaikovsky, Fifth Competition	III	185
Temianka, Henri	IV	160
Tertis, Lionel	I	262
Trampler, Walter	II	225
Tree, Michael	II	161
Tretyakov, Viktor	V	45
Turetzky, Bertram	III	287
Vardi, Emanuel	IV	81
Varga, Laszlo	III	213
Walevska, Christine	V	81
Wilkomirska, Wanda	VI	96
Zimbalist, Efrem	I	213
Zukerman, Pinchas	II	147



Book 7

Samuel Applebaum & Henry Roth

Illustrated discussions of fingering, phrasing, technics and musical philosophy with the following great artists:

FRANCO GULLI
FREDELL LACK
BARRY GREEN
WILLIAM LINCER
OSCAR SHUMSKY
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